

Buddhist Forest Monasteries and Meditation Centres in Sri Lanka

A Guide for Foreign Buddhist Monastics and Lay Practitioners

Updated: September 2015

Introduction

In Sri Lanka there are many forest hermitages and meditation centres suitable for foreign Buddhist monastics or for experienced lay Buddhists. The following information is particularly intended for foreign bhikkhus, those who aspire to become bhikkhus, and those who are experienced lay practitioners. Another guide is available for less experienced, short term visiting lay practitioners. It is called: *Information about Meditation Centres in Sri Lanka* and is available from the BPS website at www.bps.lk/library_other_publi.php.

Factors such as climate, food, noise, standards of monastic discipline (*vinaya*), dangerous animals and accessibility have been considered regarding the places listed in this work.

The book *Sacred Island* by Ven. S. Dhammika—published by the BPS—gives exhaustive information regarding ancient monasteries and other sacred sites and pilgrimage places in Sri Lanka.

Country, climate & food

The greatest concentration of forest monasteries is on the western side of the country, especially in Kurunegala, Colombo, Gālla, and Mātara districts. Due to the armed conflict with Tamil insurgents, which ended in May 2009, there are very few active forest monasteries in the northern and eastern districts, although there are ruins of ancient monasteries in many places. However, since the conflict ended there has been unprecedented economic growth and development throughout the country, and some of these monasteries are now being re-developed, most notably Kudumbigala. In the higher mountain areas such as Nuwara Eliya there are also few monasteries because the Sinhalese often find it too cold there.

The area where a monastery or meditation centre is located gives a good indication as to its climate. In the south-western low country the climate is tropical, i.e., hot and humid, especially in March/April, rather like a steam-sauna. The Eastern low country has a dry season between May and October. The South West (roughly between Mātara, Colombo, and Ratnapura) is the so-called “wet-zone” where two monsoons a year take place (May-June, November-December). The so-called “dry-zone” (This is quite an exaggeration as it can rain very heavily there during the rainy seasons and floods occur regularly.) is in the East, North, and South. This area starts about 15 kms north of Mātale, at the eastern and southern edges of the hill country (such as the eastern slopes of the Knuckles range), and east of Balangoda and Tangalle. Only one main monsoon (November-December) takes place there. The deep South (the coastal area between Ambalantota and Pānama) and the far North (Northern coast & Jaffna peninsula) are the driest areas in SL. It can be quite warm here but it is not as humid as the low-country wet zone. The “upcountry” is the hill and mountain area in the centre of Sri Lanka (roughly between Mātale, Kegalla, Balangoda, Haputale, and Badulla). The climate there is temperate and it can get cool at night. (10–22°C depending on the altitude and time of the year. In Nuwara Eliya the temperature can drop to close to freezing point in clear nights in December-January.) For those originally from cool climates it is generally a more agreeable climate than the low country. In the south-west upcountry areas such as the Singharāja rainforest and the Śrī Pāda Wilderness areas it rains a lot, and most of the year, so much so that it sometimes can be impossible to dry one’s clothes for days after washing.

Loudspeakers can be quite a disturbance in Sri Lanka, as in Asia in general. There are only a few places which completely escape the sound of the Paritta-chanting blasted from village-temples on Poya-days.

The food is generally the same everywhere and at all times in Sinhalese areas. It is usually fairly plain and simple. Rice is the staple food. The curries can be quite spicy, with chilli peppers and other spices, and can also be quite salty, especially in rural areas. Although the quality of food has improved greatly in recent times, in undeveloped rural areas food can be unnutritious due to overcooking and lack of fresh vegetables and fruits. If one finds that the food is not nutritious enough a vitamin supplement can be taken. Many people in Sri Lanka do not eat meat or fish, and even if they do, do not give it to monks. In some monasteries and meditation centres small amounts of fish might be served (meat or eggs are rarely given), but if one is a vegetarian one can easily refuse without offending anyone.

Vinaya & monastic traditions

The standards of discipline (*vinaya*) vary from tradition to tradition, and from monastery to monastery. In Sri Lanka there is not such a strong tradition of refined teacher- and monastery-etiquette as there is in the Thai Forest traditions. The Galduwa Forest Tradition has the strictest *vinaya* tradition in Sri Lanka and it also follows the commentarial interpretations strictly. In forest monasteries and meditation centres that are not affiliated with the Galduwa tradition the *vinaya* standards are generally less strict, but still reasonable. In many city and village

temples and monks' schools (*pirivenas*) (not listed in this work) the vinaya-standards can be in need of improvement.

Usually the tradition a monastery or meditation centre belongs to is mentioned as it gives an indication of what the vinaya standards and customs are like in a place. There are many traditions in Sri Lanka. The main ones are:

The Kalyāna Yogāshramaya Saṃsthāva or Galduwa tradition is an independent part of the Rāmañña Nikāya. The headquarters is in Galduwa, near Ambalangoda. It is the largest forest sect in Sri Lanka. Now there are about 150 centres affiliated with this tradition. The monks are easily recognised by the palm-leaf umbrella they carry and by the habit of wearing the double robe whenever they go outside the monastery boundaries. Members of all castes are accepted. Bhikkhus from other traditions who wish to become resident for a long period at one of their monasteries are usually requested to reordain at Galduwa. Until recently, the procedure would be to do a *dalhikamma*, a short ceremony intended to reconfirm the original *upasampadā* in accordance with the Galduwa standards, but reportedly this is not done in most places now. Monks who ordained in a Pa Auk monastery in Burma or in a monastery in the Ajahn Chah tradition are accepted and do not require a new *upasampadā*.

The *Deldūva group* is a small group of forest monasteries. It is an older forest division of the Rāmañña Nikāya, which is not affiliated with the Galduwa tradition.

The Mahāvihāra Vaṃshika Shyāmapāli Vanavāsa Nikāya or Waturawila group has over 80 branch monasteries throughout the country. The Vinaya standards are not as strict as in the Galduwa group, but are generally reasonable. Usually the monasteries of this tradition have a few elderly monks who are retired government servants and therefore speak English well. The headquarters are in Waturawila in Gālla district.

Madakada group is a sub-sect of the Waturawila group that follows stricter Vinaya standards has its headquarters in Madakada Aranya near Ingiriya.

The *Vajirāma Tradition or Dharmarakshita Chapter* is a subsect of the Amarapura Nikāya. Its headquarters are Vajirāramaya, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 4 and Dharmāyatana Bhikkhu Training Centre, Maharagama, Colombo. There are a few forest monasteries with stricter Vinaya standards connected with this tradition, notably Bowalawatta Aranya (Kandy), Katu Pota Aranya (Mihintale), Senanāyakārāmaya (Kandy), Island Hermitage (Polgasduwa) and Parapaduwa (Gāla).

The *Kanduboda group or Swejyin Nikāya chapter* of the Amarapura Nikāya is a group of monasteries connected to the Kanduboda International Meditation Centre and with Sumantiphala Meditation Centre. It originates from the Mahasi Sayadaw tradition, which is part of the Burmese Swejyin Nikāya. The Mahasi Sayadaw meditation technique is practised. It has reasonable standards of Vinaya. There are about twenty small meditation centres connected to this tradition in and near towns but most have little to attract foreigners.

The *Tapovana group or Kalyāṇavaṃsa chapter* of the Amarapura Nikāya is a small group of semi forest monasteries usually situated near major towns. The headquarters are near Colombo. Usually the Mahāsi meditation method is practised. The monks have reasonable Vinaya standards.

The Mahamevnāva group. A rapidly growing new reformist tradition or movement, started in early 2000s and founded and led by the popular Dhamma teacher Ven. Kiribathgoda Ñāṇānanda. The main emphasis is to study Dhamma and revive Sinhala Buddhism. Most monasteries, called *asapuwa*, are in village and town areas and all are crowded, especially on Uposatha days, when thousands of people will come to participate in Poya programs. The monasteries are well kept and the monks, who are generally young, are motivated and well behaved. The headquarters is Mahamevnāva Asapuwa near Kegalla. It is connected to the Kalyāṇavaṃsa branch of the Amarapura Nikāya. Without permission from Ven. Ñāṇānanda one can only stay 3 days at monasteries.

Information on the formation and history of the forest traditions in Sri Lanka can be found in Michael Carrithers' book *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka*, Oxford 1983.

Note that although some monasteries are called "meditation centre" there might be no meditation teaching happening there.

Culture, manners

Normally travelling monks are welcome to stay in any monastery for the night. Even if there is no monastery in a village, one can stay in the school or some other empty building. For longer stays in a monastery, one needs to ask permission from the abbot and it is normally readily granted if there is space.

In some places the Sinhalese monks might not be so helpful due to negative experiences with foreigners or perhaps due to nationalist sentiments. There have also been recent issues that led to anti-foreign feelings, caused by foreign reactions to the armed conflict in the North. What apparently can also happen is that Sinhalese people can misperceive a foreign monk's reservedness as disdain. This is difficult to avoid as Sinhalese people tend to be quite inquisitive and after a while one can develop a habit of being reserved. However, it is good to make an effort to remain polite and not to appear harsh.

Bhikkhus generally do not get honoured in the same manner as in Thailand or Burma. The body language and the way Sinhalese people and monks speak and behave might appear disrespectful to monks used to Thai or Burmese customs.

Although Sinhalese people themselves can be critical about problems in their country, as a foreigner one generally it is better not to talk about politics and the like. One has to be careful not to develop an overly critical

attitudes about things that can be improved in monasteries or the rituals that the locals do. Like most Asians, Sri Lankans are generally quite indirect and are afraid of blame.

In general one can be, and needs to be, independent in Sri Lanka. If one likes to practice independently and is not looking for a charismatic teacher figure or tightly knit monastic group to support one's practice, then Sri Lanka may be suitable. Sinhalese culture, being part of the Indian cultural sphere, allows more individualism than the conformist Thai culture, which is part of the Chinese cultural sphere. Sinhalese leave space to others and there is not such a strong teacher-tradition in Sri Lanka as in Thailand. Nevertheless, there are monks, nuns, and lay practitioners who can give useful instructions and help one along the way.

Travel & communication

Conditions in meditation centres and monasteries can be very basic and sometimes uncomfortable for those used to comforts. Meditation centres and monasteries are not so well off in Sri Lanka and only a few of them will have a vehicle. One has to get used to taking public transport or walking when one wants to go somewhere. Bhikkhus who do not use money can use special coupons with which one can travel on government buses (known as CTB, Ceylon Transport Board). The monastery one stays in can usually supply these. There are also special monks' coupons to travel on trains.

Sri Lanka used to be a British colony and there are many Sinhalese people who can speak English well, especially in Colombo and other big towns. However, in remote country areas it can be more difficult to find English speakers. Nevertheless, in almost every village there will be (or is supposed to be) an English teacher in the village school who will be keen to practise his English and can help with translating if necessary. In the bigger meditation centres and monasteries there is usually someone who can speak English, but in the more remote and smaller monasteries this might not be the case. It is not difficult to learn spoken Sinhala and people are usually helpful and understanding. Many English or rather "Singlish" terms have made their way into the Sinhala language, for example a bus stop is called "bus halt" a "bus station" a "bus stand," and one "gets down" from a bus rather than getting off or out of it. If one uses such information one is more likely to be understood. All people have learnt a bit of English at school, so if there is no other way one can try with simple English terms.

Medical care & diseases

The medical care in government hospitals is free for monks in Sri Lanka. There are bhikkhu-wards in the larger hospitals for those bhikkhus who are seriously ill. Medical care and hygiene are generally not of the same standards as in the West, but the doctors usually do their best to help sick bhikkhus. There are quite a few doctors and dentists who have trained and worked in the West. The monastery one is connected with will help if one needs medicines or medical care. The best hospitals are the large private hospitals in Colombo, but they are expensive. The same doctors who work in the private hospitals also work in government hospitals, but the equipment and facilities in government hospitals are often of a lesser standard, especially in rural hospitals. Dentists often help monks for free.

Unlike some other tropical countries, tropical diseases are not so common because the government healthcare system is well organised. Malaria has been eradicated from Sri Lanka. However, in some urban areas, especially in and around Colombo, there are cases of dengue fever (called "dengu") and chikungunya fever, and, to a much lesser degree, Japanese encephalitis. In some western and south-western coastal areas there is a small risk of contracting the filaria parasite that causes swelling of the lymph nodes and elephantiasis. A campaign is being waged to eradicate this disease. All these diseases are spread by mosquitos. It is therefore always good to use mosquito nets and repellents. Note that the dengue fever mosquito bites during the daytime in shady places. The drinking water is generally of good quality in Sri Lanka; nevertheless, it is always safer to drink boiled, filtered or bottled water.

There is rabies in Sri Lanka and one should go to the local hospital for anti-rabies shots if one is bitten by a dog, stray cat, (fruit-) bat, or by a macaque monkey. The Sinhalese are well aware of the danger of rabies and many dogs are vaccinated against it. Every major hospital has an anti-rabies clinic where one can get the vaccination-shots, which nowadays are completely painless and without side effects.

There is also Leptospirosis or Weil's disease, a dangerous disease characterized by jaundice and fever, which is transmitted by rats' urine in contaminated water in paddy fields, etc., or on on surfaces such as floors, by way of cuts on the skin.

Intestinal pinworms or threadworms are common in Sri Lanka. These usually harmless creatures are spread through food, particularly raw vegetables, touched by the unwashed hands of an infected person. Their presence is marked by itching in the anal area at night. Regular washing one's hands and bottom with soap will usually stop them from reinfesting oneself. If this does not work, an anti-worm tablet will dispell them. Other types of worms are quite rare in Sri Lanka since no raw meat and fish is eaten.

Dangerous animals

Compared to some other tropical areas such as South America or Africa, Sri Lankan nature is benevolent; however there are creatures that one has to be wary of. In many undeveloped jungle areas in the South, East, and North, such as around Ritigala, Kudumbigala, Sīthulpahuva, Rājagala and even Sīgiriya, there are wild elephants and bears

which regularly attack and kill people. Monks have been attacked by these beasts and one has to take care when in or near jungle areas, especially at night. The best thing to do when an elephant charges is to run away in a zigzag manner and hide behind a tree or rock. Elephants can run very quickly in a straight line, much quicker than humans, but have difficulties turning. The bear is considered the most unpredictable and dangerous animal by the Sinhalese. People have been killed or badly maimed by them in forest areas. They are good climbers and runners. If one cannot escape, then fall face down on the ground with one's arms spread out and pretend to be dead. The bear will normally want to maul one's face and neck, but if one lies face down and with the arms spread out so that the bear cannot turn one over, then the injuries will be on the back of the head and neck where they are less dangerous. Wild pigs are also known to charge at people and one had better keep away from them. Leopards are very shy and only attack people very rarely. They are not considered a danger.

There are various dangerous snakes such as cobras, Russell's vipers, and kraits in Sri Lanka and many people are killed each year due to snakebites, especially by Russell's vipers and kraits. So take care when going off paths into the jungle, etc. Kraits are nocturnal snakes and often bite people while they sleep. The snake is attracted to the body heat of a sleeping person and it may bite when the person turns over in his sleep. Cobras are shy and will only bite when cornered. Vipers, however, will often not move at all when one approaches and are much more likely to bite. When bitten by a snake, do not panic, note what kind of snake it is and try to go to a hospital as soon as possible to get antivenin. Do not trust village snake doctors. There are also crocodiles in rivers, lakes and ponds in the south and east of the country so ask a local before bathing.

The bite of the big black or blue-green scorpions one often encounters after heavy rainfall is like the bite of a wasp and not dangerous. On the other hand, centipede bites are very painful. Tarantula spiders occasionally enter houses, but they rarely bite people unless provoked. Sri Lankan tarantula bites can cause partial paralysis and severe pain.

Leeches ("kudella") or ticks ("khinithulla") are present in most forest and scrub areas. Leeches are common in humid wet-zone forests, especially on hills and mountains, while ticks are common in dry zone lowland forests. It is rare to have both leeches and ticks in one area. If not treated, leech bites cause bleeding for 10 minutes or more because the leech injects an anti-coagulant into the blood. One will generally not feel the leech bite until the leech has detached and blood starts to flow from the wound. It is best to put tissue, paper or ash on the bite to stop the bleeding. It is easy to remove the leech by pulling or scratching it off. To prevent bites one can avoid going off paths and swept areas into areas with leaves and undergrowth. Putting mosquito repellent, soap, or salt on one's feet will repel them off for a while. There will usually be no itching, unless one is allergic to leech bites. Leeches do not transmit diseases and the bites usually do not become infected. Ticks are common in dry zone forests with a lot of tall grasses and shrubs, especially in national parks where there is a lot of wildlife. Tick bites can cause a lot of itching which can last for days, and due to scratching the wounds, the bites can get infected. Ticks can be quite small and difficult to spot and can climb up one's robes to one's abdomen and back of one's head. They generally bite in soft spots such as the upper legs. Fortunately, they are not known to transmit diseases such as Lyme's disease or other borrelia fevers in Sri Lanka. One can avoid them by not going into scrubby areas and washing oneself and one's clothes well with soap if one has done so. If one has been bitten, then it is best to apply a four way action antiseptic cream (which contains a combination of antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, analgesic and soothing ingredients) as are sold in pharmacies in Australia (Paraderm Plus, Medi Quattro First Aid Cream, etc.). Ticks should never be pulled out straight, which can cause the head to break off and remain embedded, but should be carefully twisted around until they let go by themselves.

It is advisable to use a mosquito-net in forests and rural areas to keep away kraits and other dangerous creatures such as scorpions, centipedes, and mosquitos. However, the risk of having a serious traffic accident while walking on the street or, especially, travelling on a bus is much greater than that of being bitten or attacked by some dangerous creature in the jungle.

Visas

In Sri Lanka, after an initial 3 month visa, Buddhist monks get a free one year residence visa, which need only be extended annually. Since 2010 one needs to have an entry visa from a Sri Lankan embassy before one enters the country if one wants to later apply for a residence visa. The website of the Sri Lanka immigration states: "To obtain a Residence Visa, it is necessary to arrive in Sri Lanka on an Entry Visa issued by a Sri Lankan Mission abroad with the concurrence of the Controller General of Immigration and Emigration. The fact that you wish to apply for Sri Lankan Residence Visa has to be mentioned when obtaining the entry visa and necessary supporting documents has to be submitted."¹ The supporting documents one will need to obtain from the abbot of the monastery where one intends to stay. One can enter the country on a one month tourist visa, which needs to be paid for online (US\$15) or in cash on entry into the country (\$20).² This tourist visa can be extended two times for a further two months, but then one will have to leave the country to apply for a religious residence visa from a Sri Lankan embassy abroad

¹ http://www.immigration.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=153&Itemid=198&lang=en

² www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/visainfo/fees.jsp

(not necessarily one's home country), of course with the recommendation letter of the monastery. There are no exemptions to this.

In order to apply for a residence visa, one needs to get a sponsorship letter from the senior monk of the monastery where one stays or with which one is connected, then one needs to go with this letter and the so-called "application form to obtain a letter of recommendation to extend the residence visa" (available at monasteries and/or the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs in Colombo) to the monk who is the secretary of the district (*lekhakādhikāri handuruwo*). If one applies for the first time for a residence visa, then please check whether another form is required from the Ministry of Buddha Sasana rather than the one to extend an existing visa, otherwise one might be turned away at the Ministry of Buddha Sasana. One then needs to get the application form signed by him and stamped with his official seal. (It is best to telephone the secretary monk beforehand and make an appointment. For example, the secretary monk in Kandy is only available certain days of the week.) Then this form needs to be signed and stamped by the secretary of the Provincial Council (*Kacceri*). (Note that if one still has a passport photo as a laymen in one's passport that a passport photo as a monk will need to be attached to this application. It will also need to be stamped and signed by the district monk and provincial council secretary.) The monastery where one stays will usually help with this. When this preliminary paper work has been done, one can go to the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs at 135 Dharmapala Mawatha (opposite Vihara Maha Devi Park) in Colombo 7 (Tel. 0111-340-7401/ 011-230-7402. Fax: 011-230-7409). (no longer opposite the Lanka Vipassanā Centre) and get a recommendation letter to take to the Department of Immigration. (Do not forget to ask for an extra application form for next year.) For the first time application for a residence visa, one needs to bring along two or three passport photos. (They can be obtained from a shop at the Dept. of Immigration itself.) The Department of Immigration is in Maradāna, within walking distance from the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs. (No. 41 Ananda Rajakaruna Mawatha, Punchi Borella, Colombo 10. Tel. 011-532-9300.) However, there are plans in the near future to move this Department to Battaramulla, which is an outer suburb about a 45 minute/ 1 hour bus ride from central Colombo. At the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs one generally has to wait less than one hour. At the Immigration Department usually one and a half hours, perhaps more. The Immigration Department might ask one to come back in a few days. If you live in a forest monastery some distance from Colombo one can ask if it is possible to get the visa the same day (usually it takes about 2 hours). One can go to the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs in the morning and go the Immigration in the afternoon.

Conclusion

There are many monasteries listed in this guide, but when one has seen a couple of monasteries connected to different traditions, in a different areas of the country, then one has an idea of what all of them will roughly be like. There is no perfect place in saṃsāra and as long as one is not liberated from mental defilements one will sooner or later start to find fault with a monastery which at first appeared to be great. There is no monastery which is perfectly quiet and where the monks are all arahants. So, this guide is not intended as a guide to find the perfect place, as a bible for restless monks. There was one user of this guide who went to many of the forest monasteries in this guide but still could not find the perfect conditions he was seeking. So rather than trying to find the perfect external place, which does not exist, it is more realistic to be content with an imperfect place and learn to deal with the defilements that come up in one's mind. Nevertheless, there are particular conditions such as climate and food which affect each person differently and this guide can be used to find a place which matches one's physical constitution and temperament. It can also be used when travelling or going on *cārikā*, a walking journey, so that one can walk from forest monastery to forest monastery or stay in other places with a reasonable *vinaya* practice.

Updates

This is a basic guide mainly intended for Buddhist monks, not for laypeople. The information given is liable to change and might be inaccurate.

The guide is based on a basic list of monasteries made 15 years ago. It was then made into a guide by Ven. Nyanatusita. Several monks have helped with proofreading and updating this guide.

To help keep this list current, accurate and relevant please send suggestions and information (contact details, abbot's name, no. of monks, facilities, no. kutis, condition, etc., affiliation, etc.), from you own experience, to: Bhikkhu Nyanatusita, Forest Hermitage, Udawattakele, PO Box 61, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Email: nyanatusita[at]gmail.com.

Abbreviations

aff.: Affiliation/Affiliated with.

A: Aranya.

AS: Aranya Senāsanaya.

BM: Bhāvanā Madhyasthānaya/Meditation Centre.

T: Tapovanaya.

Y: Yogāshramaya.

VMC: Vipassanā Meditation Centre.

DA: Dharmāshramaya.

MC: Meditation Centre/ Bhāvanā Madhyasthānaya

S: Senāsanaya.

Best places for those who are new to Sri Lanka

Nā Uyana AS. Pansiyagama 60554. Tel: 037 337 9036, 037 494 3688 or 037567 7328. Email: nauyana@gmail.com. The website: www.nauyana.org gives useful information. To get there get off at Melsiripura on the Kurunegala-Dambulla Rd, from there take bus to Pansiyagama. From there it is a 30 min. walk. The meditation teacher is Ven. Ariyananda Thera, who speaks good English and has an excellent knowledge of the Pa Auk Samatha and Vipassanā methods. Good kutis, library and facilities. Strict adherence to Vinaya (monastic discipline). There is a meditative atmosphere and the place is reasonably well organised and tidy. At the moment it is the most prominent meditation place in the Galduwa Saṃsthāva. Many foreign bhikkhus, Western as well as Asian, mostly Taiwanese, are staying here. The monastery area covers thousands of acres of hill slopes and there are four monastery sections: The old monastery where the uposatha hall is located in the valley. The meditation retreat section, with its own meditation hall, is located on top of the hill. Behind this, further to the North-east there is a retreat section, where monks can dwell in kutis in seclusion and have their own dana sala down the hill to the east. The fourth section, down the hill to the west of the retreat section, near the village of Endagala, is an “ascetic” section, with a few simple mud kutis. The central area of the monastery consists of an ancient monastery with a few caves and a beautiful forest with many big ironwood trees (Nā trees). This area was a small forest monastery from the 1960s until 1996, when it became a meditation centre in the Pa Auk tradition. The hills to the north of this area, where many kutis have been built, are being reforested. There are about one hundred monks and 30 laypeople at present, but because the monastery is so large and divided into different sections it does not feel crowded. There is a separate nunnery for female practitioners, called Dhammika Ashramaya, a few kilometers away.

Nissarana Vanaya or **Mītirigala A.** Mītirigala (Meetirigala) 11742. Tel: 033-492-1135/ 033-333-9193. Email: nissaranavanya@gmail.com Website: nissarana.lk. A large, 100 hectare, forest monastery 30 kms east of Colombo. Founded in 1968. About 15 resident monks, usually including a few foreign monks. The meditation teacher, Ven. Dhammajīva, speaks excellent English and meditated for a long time with Sayādaw U Paṇḍita in Burma. He mostly teaches Mahāsi method and offers several retreats every year in English (and many more in Sinhala). For the past few years he has been teaching overseas for extensive periods outside of the Rains Retreat. The library has a good English and German section. Strict standards of Vinaya. Dense low-country jungle on a hill. Humid and hot climate; some leeches. Good support and food by Sri Lankan standards. Sometimes some loudspeaker noise from the village. The Dharmāyatana (see entry in “The Area Around Colombo” Section) is on the hill next to Nissarana Vanaya, a 25 minute walk away. From Colombo take a Kirindiwela Bus at Central Bus stand in Pita Kotuwa (Pettah). The bus leaves close to the Bodhi tree outside the station. In Kirindiwella, ask for a bus to Ranwalla or Wedagama, get off at Mītirigala. It’s a 25 min. walk from the bus-stop to monastery. It is also possible to get off at Pallegama Junction (between Kirindiwela and Pūgoda) and catch buses to Mītirigala Junction. (Do not take the bus to Amītirigala which is further away. If coming from the Ratanapura side, one can take a bus to Amītirigala from Avissawella and ask the driver to stop at the Mītirigala junction. It is about 40 minutes walk from there. If coming from Kandy, take a Colombo bus and get off at Nitambuwa, then go to Kirindiwela, etc.)

Bowalawatta A. or University Forest Solitude (or Vajirārāma A.), Bowalawatta, Hantāna, nr. Kandy. (081 380 9210). In a large forest (previously a tea-estate) on the mountain above Perādeniya University (1 hour’s walk). About 8 kms from Kandy town. Very quiet. Approx. 15 kutis. Neat, clean, and orderly. Cool climate. In the rainy seasons it can be quite humid, with many leeches. Many foreign monks have stayed here. There is no teacher. Affiliated to the Vajirāma group Dharmarakshita chapter of the Amurapura Nikāya. At the Kandy Clock tower station take a Bowalawatta bus. The conductors will know the place where you should get off. From there follow the signs.

Sumantiphala BM. Hilbatgala Rd, Kanduboda, Delgoḍa. Tel: 011-240-2805. Located right next to Kanduboda VMC (see next entry). The abbot and teacher is Ven. Premasiri, a popular and experienced teacher in the Mahāsi tradition as well as other traditional meditation techniques. There are daily question and answer Dhamma discussions from 3-4pm. A book of his teachings called *Walking the Tighrope* has been published by the Buddhist Publication Society. The place is mainly for laypeople who do not need much guidance, but several foreign monks, especially Czech, stay here too. Ven. Premasiri does not ordain monks any more. The female yogis and nuns have their own separate areas. The facilities are nice and spacious. Lay people have built many kutis and the place looks a bit like a village. Warm and humid climate. It is close to a small road and surrounded by coconut plantations and a few village houses. It is about 20 kms east of Colombo. From the CTB Bus Station at Olcott Mawatha, Pita Kotuwa (Pettah), take the bus no. 224 which stops outside the Kanduboda VMC monastery.

Kanduboda VMC or Siyane VMC. Kanduboda, Delgoḍa. Tel. 011-244-5518; 011-257-0306. E-mail: bhavanam@sltnet.lk A meditation centre and monastery with a long tradition of offering meditation instruction. Besides monks and nuns, also lay meditators stay here and some take ordination. The abbot and teacher at present is Ven. Piyaratana Thera. Women have a separate, enclosed area, and ordination has sometimes been given for western women (which may interest potential *dasa-sīl-menayos*). A few large buildings with rooms and some kutis. The teaching is in the Mahāsi tradition and the monastery arose out of Mahāsi tradition Sayādaws teaching here in the 1950s or 1960s. One is expected to meditate more than 10 hours a day. The teachers speak little English. The cost to stay here is Rs. 5000 regardless of the duration of staying. Although the tradition is part of the Amurapura Nikāya, it has a separate ordination lineage, originating from the Swejyin Nikāya of Burma (to which Mahāsi Sayādaw belonged). The daily

schedule and discipline is more relaxed than in the Mahāsi centres in Burma and there is more individual meditation than group meditation. Kanduboda has more than 25 branches throughout the country. Most have little to attract foreigners. The directions are the same as for Sumantiphala BM (see previous entry).

Lankā Vipassanā MC. 108 Wijerāma Mawatha, Colombo 7. Good support, tidy, clean, quiet. In Colombo's diplomatic quarter. The place used to be connected to Kandubodha VMC but the current abbot is connected to the Galduwa tradition. Monks can stay here.

Dhammakūṭa VMC. Mowbray, Galaha Road, Hindagala, Perādeniya. (Nr. Kandy). Tel.: 081-238-5774 or 081-383-7800. email: info@kuta.dhamma.org. Website: www.kuta.dhamma.org. A meditation centre where 10-day Vipassanā Meditation courses are given in the tradition of Sayagi U Ba Khin as taught by S.N. Goenka. It is located in an abandoned tea estate on a mountain slope with nice views and a cool climate. Meditation courses, in English as well as Sinhala, are held here. One cannot stay here outside of retreat periods. It is better to book well in advance since the courses are often fully booked. Course information and applications forms are available online. It has places for six monks at each course and once a year, in November or December, there is a course for bhikkhus only. It is important to bring all basic personal requisites such as towels, bed-sheets, soap, mosquito repellent, vitamins, medicines, torch, alarm-clock, etc. Located about 5 kms from Perādeniya towards the south. From Kandy, take a Galaha bus. Another Goenka Vipassanā Centre, called Dhammasobha VMC, has been opened near Avissawella, and another large one near Anuradhapura called Dhamma Anurudha see Colombo/ Avissawella and Anuradhapura sections below.

Nilambe Meditation Centre. Mahakanda, Galaha Road, Perādeniya. Contact information is on nilambe.net/contact-us.php. A major lay-meditation centre in Sri Lanka for foreign visitors, both male and female. Occasionally monks are visiting or staying here for a while, but it is not suitable for a Buddhist monks in the long term. There is a Rs 800/- a day charge for lodgings and food. There is a strict daily schedule and little talking. It is located in a scenic, quiet area on a mountain in tea-estate-country, with a cool climate, and many leeches. Godwin Samararatne, the respected and internationally known meditation teacher, who passed away in early 2000, was long connected to this place. The resident teacher is Mr. Upul Gamage. Other teachers also come and teach. Lay people can only stay for the 5 or 7 day retreat courses, that have to be booked beforehand, and not in between courses. The centre is located about 20 kms south of Kandy. To get there by bus: take a Delthota bus from the Kandy Goodshed Bus Stand (near the train station) and get off at the Nilambe Bungalow Junction (17km from Kandy). From there it is a steep 45 min. walk (or taxi/three wheeler ride) through tea plantations. The gate is open from 6am to 5pm.

Complete List

Colombo City

Pagoda Meditation Centre. 49/2, 1st Cross Street, Pagoda Road, Nugegoda. Tel: 011-281-2397 (8am-9am, 8pm-9pm only). Email: olandeananda@gmail.com Website: http://groups.msn.com/PagodaMeditationCentre. A centre started a few years ago by Ven. Olanda Ānanda, a well-known senior Dutch monk who speaks fluent Sinhala and has been teaching meditation for a long time in Sri Lanka and abroad. There are meditation retreats held by Ven. Ānanda and there is accommodation for laypeople. Situated in a quiet area in a suburb of Colombo.

Kanduboda VMC. Delgoḍa. See Best Places section.

Lanka Vipassanā MC. 108 Wijerāma Mawatha, Colombo 7. See Best Places section.

Shri Kalyāṇī DA (Formerly known as "German Dharmadūta"), 418/31 Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, 00700. (Tel: 011-269-6494) Abbot: Ven. Nanda thera. This is the main Galduwa monastery in Colombo, thus sometimes crowded with visiting and sick monks from all over Sri Lanka. Guest monks normally stay in a dormitory. Strict Vinaya standards, clean and tidy. Between a major road and school, so it can be fairly noisy.

Nārada Centre or International Buddhist Research and Information Centre (IBRIC), 380/9, Sarana Road, Colombo 00700. Email: mettavihari@gmail.com. Opposite the back entrance of the BMICH. Connected to Maharagama (see next). A small place where outsiders usually cannot stay. The Danish Bhikkhu Mettavihāri can provide useful information to Westerners new to the country, but he is usually only here at night.

Dharmāyatana Bhikkhu Training Centre or Siri Vajiranyāna Dharmāyatana. Siri Vajiranyāna Mawatha, Maharagama. Tel. 011-285-0305 or 011-285-0207. Usually referred to as Maharagama. A major training-centre, *pirivena*, for young Sinhalese monks. There is a "meditation-section" in the back where foreign monks who come to renew their visas occasionally stay. There are over 25 branches throughout the country. A few forest monasteries with stricter vinaya standards are connected to this tradition; Bowalawatta Aranya being the major one. In general it is not a forest tradition though and the emphasis lies on study, teaching, and service.

Sri Vajirāramaya. Vajira Road, Bambalapitiya. Colombo 4. Tel. 011-258-4202. Email: vajiraramaweb@gmail.com. Site: www.vajirarama.lk. Close to Gālla Road. An old and renowned monastery with a famous tradition of scholars like Ven. Nārada, Soma, Kheminda, and Ven. Piyadassi. There is a good library, which has recently been renovated.

Venerable Ānanda, Anunāyaka of the Amarapura Nikāya, who is very capable and friendly, is staying here and is helping to revive this tradition. Vajirāma Group of the Amarapura Nikāya.

Buddhist Cultural Centre (BCC), 125 Anderson Road, Nedimala, Dehiwala. Tel. 011-273-4256, 011-272-6234, or 011-272-8468. Fax. 011-273-6737. E-mail: info@buddhistcc.com. Web Site: <http://buddhistcc.net>. Open all days (including Poya and holidays) from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm. Director: Ven. Vimalajoti thera. There is a comprehensive selection of Buddhist Books. There is a branch-bookshop at the junction of Baudhaloka Mawatha and Sarana Road in the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress compound, and 2 smaller centres, one in Kelaniya, and another near Lake House alongside the cetiya opposite the Hilton. In 2011 a seven-storey multi-purpose building, including a bookshop and conference hall, and information centre, was opened at Jayanthi Madira 32, Sambuddha Jayanthi Mawatha, Colombo 5. Affiliated with the BCC is a meditation centre in Horana outside Colombo, Dekandūwala Meditation Centre, see the next section.

Central Hospital Vajirāramaya, Central Hospital, Colombo, 011-269-2018. Small vihāra in the General Hospital. One can eat lunch here when going to the hospital for treatment or when visiting the nearby police mortuary (on St. Francis St.) or hospital mortuary (off Kinsey Road).

Vishva Niketan International Peace Centre. 72/30 Rawatawatte Road, Moratuwa. Tel/Fax: 011-265-5653 E-mail: vishvaniketan@mail.ewisl.net. Aff. Sarvodaya, a social self-help movement. There are programs for males and females of all religions. There are also anti-stress programs for businesses and other organisations.

Gilan-āvāsaya, 525/3 Elvitigala Mawatha, Narahenpita, Colombo 5, 00500. Tel: 011-236-8254. Small place, conveniently located, where sick Galdūwa monks can stay in Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Rahula. Opposite Pan Asia Bank, lane just before Kirimandala Mawatha and large Bodhi tree. There is a tyre shop at the entrance to the lane. Aff. Galdūwa.

Vipassanā Bhāvanāyatana, Sri Jayawardenapura Rajamalvatte, Rajasaba Mawatha, Kotte. Tel. 011-286-3635. Teacher: Ven. Erapola Vipassī. **Sri Kavidhaja Vachissara MC**. High Level Road, Mīgoda. **VMC**. Talagala, Milleva.

Colombo District, Avissawella, and Gampaha

Due to its proximity to the capital, there are many monasteries in this area. Mostly flatland with some isolated hills, rubber estates and paddyfields. Generally has a hot and humid climate. Listed here are the monasteries and centres in the area about 30 kms around Colombo, although some could have been included in Kegalla district, etc.

Sri Nānarāma Dharmāyatana, Meetirigala 11742. Near Kirindiwela. On the hill next to Nissarana Vanaya, entrance road starts almost opposite the NV entrance. This place was originally set up to be the largest study and vinaya training centre of the Galdūwa group. In the 1990s it was used as a Pa Auk meditation centre for a while. Now, again it is a Galdūwa tradition study centre with a dozen monks. At present, Ven. Ariyadhamma Thera, the head of the Galdūwa group, is staying here. He is highly proficient in the Pa Auk meditation system as well as in the Mahāsi meditation system and is a Tipitaka Bhāṇaka, having mastered the Pāli scriptures. He knows and visits all Galdūwa monasteries regularly and can give advice about their suitability. Large meditation hall; rooms in a compound, a few kutis; regrowth forest. Hot and humid climate.

Nissarana Vanaya. See Best Places section above.

Dikhena BM / Sri Lanka Myanmar Pa Auk Meditation Centre. Dikhena, Polgasowita 10320. (Tel: 011-278-0140) Meditation Centre. Facilities for laymen and laywomen. Set in coconut estate near Piliyandala, Kesbeva, south of Colombo. Facilities for about 12 monks. Two-week meditation courses for laymen and laywomen. Excellent meditation hall. Fairly quiet. Kutis/rooms are either close to each other or adjoining. It is reported that the former abbot, Ven. Mīthalave Vinīta Thera, who teaches Mahāsi Method, left in 2012 and only a few monks remain. Ven. Dasvattee Sumanasīla Thera teaches Pa Auk method when visiting. From Colombo take bus No 120 in the direction of Horana. At Polgasovita get off at the petrol station and walk down the road to the centre (10 minutes) or take a three wheeler. At times hot and humid. Aff. Galdūwa.

Dekandūwala Meditation Centre or Dhamma Training Centre. Kahatapitiya-Kananwīla, Horana. (Tel: 034-428-6334. Website: <http://site.buddhistcc.com/meditation-centre>) Inquiries and bookings should normally be made through Ven. Vimalajothi at the Buddhist Cultural Centre (see above in Colombo section). The place is nicely situated on a hill-top. Both small huts (*kutis*) and rooms are available for lay-meditators. Good facilities, nice meditation hall, quiet, nice views. Westerners are welcome to stay here. One can stay for two weeks. There is a program in which young Sinhalese men can take ordination temporarily. About 20 kms south-east of Colombo. There is no charge for the lodgings and food, but donations are appreciated. Siyam Nikāya. Take the 120 bus from Colombo. It is close to the Vidyaratana Pirivena. If traveling from Homagama, Padukka or Horana: get off at the Govipola junction.

Dhammasobha VMC. Balika Vidyalā Road, Pahala, Kosgama. Tel: 036-2253755 or 0714182094. Email: info@sobha.dhamma.org. Website: www.sobha.dhamma.org. Along the highway from Colombo to Avissawella. A 6 acre Vipassanā meditation centre in the tradition of Goenkaji. It is much warmer and, due to its proximity to the highway, noisier than Dhammakūṭa near Kandy.

Shanti Y. Arukpitiya, Talangama South 10120. (Tel: 011-286-4973) 10 kms east of Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Dhammasiddhi. Friendly and supportive. Monastery in small area with many buildings. A bit cramped. A few kutis. Some noise. Foreign monks have stayed here. Aff. Galdūwa.

- Ñānacetiya Y.** Raiyadoluva, Uggalboda, Udugampola 11030. Head Monk: Ven. Dhammananda who speaks good English and is very knowledgeable with regards the suttas and vinaya. One can go on piṇḍapata. Aff. Galduwa.
- Sri Piyanda VMC**, Naiwala Road, Udugampola, Doranagoda, Gampaha. Quite a large centre—probably has kuṭis. Ven. Visuddhi is the head monk. Foreigners have stayed there. Aff. Kanduboda.
- Gothama Tapovanaya.** Kalapaluwewa, Mulleriyawa-New Town. Tel: 011-286-3826/288-4962. A Buddhist centre established in a humid and hot twelve acre forest grove three kilometres from the Colombo city limit. A monastery with a Mahāsi tradition meditation centre and a boy's orphanage. The abbot is D. Chandrasiri Thera, the Nāyaka Thera of the Kalyāṇavaṃsa division of the Amarapura Nikāya, to which the Tapovana group and Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda's Mahamevṇāva group are connected.
- Isigilikanda VMC.** On a rock-hill with caves about 5 kms away from Kanduboda towards the north, near Naranwala, via Udupila. Hot. Currently there are no monks and it is not so suitable. Good views and a pool for bathing.
- Mahamevṇāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Dompe, Palugama. Monastery that used to be connected to Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda's 'Mahamevṇāva Asapuwa' tradition (see Kegalla section). Kuṭis in regrowth jungle in an abandoned rubber-estate on a hill in the Dompee area. Well supported, clean.
- Sirimangala Y.** Danawikanda, Weliveriya. On Colombo–Meetirigala bus route. Coconut estate. Nice kuṭis. One big house. Aff. Galduwa. **Haddagala AS** or **Indomulla AS.** Indolamulla, Dompe 11680. About 20 kms E of Colombo. Rocks, 20 minute climb, good views, secluded. 1 monk. Get off ½-1 km past Dompe Hospital (on left coming from Kanduboda). Aff. Galduwa. **Aturugiriya BM**, Aturugiriya 10150. Ask the way from Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Nāṇānanda thera. Formerly a study place, but now a meditation centre. Aff. Galduwa. **Ratnagiri Vivekāshrāmaya**, Napawala, Avissawella. Abbot: Ven. Sanghasubhadra. Old bungalow in rubber estate. Perhaps kuṭis. 3 kms from Avissawella.
- Shri Kalyāna DA.** No. 272, Dompe 11680. 35 kms E of Colombo. Aff. Galduwa. **Shri Sumana Y.** Pelengashena, Dompe. Aff. Galduwa. **Arunodaya AS.** Puwakpitiya. Aff. Galduwa. **Varana A.** Varana. (= 5 kms E from Yakkala on Colombo-Kandy road.) Aff. Galduwa. **Devagiri AS.** Puwakmal Ella, Udamalibada 71411. Avissawella area. Aff. Galduwa. **Shailagiri Y.** Deraniyagala 71430. 15 kms E of Avissawella, Kegalla District. Aff. Galduwa. **Shaila-pabbata Y.** Vidiyawatta, (Miyanawīṭa), Deraniyagala 71432. Aff. Galduwa. **Sama Uyana Tapovanaya.** Galboda, Vaturugama 11742. East (?) of Kirindiwela. Aff. Tapovana Group. **Sri Shānta Tapovanaya AS.** Katuwewa, Kaḷagedihena 11875. Aff. Tapovana Group. **Siri Mangala Y.** Danavkanda, Kirikitta, Weliveriya 11710. 25 kms NE of Colombo. Aff. Galduwa. **Sailagiri Y.** Deraniyagala. (Near Avissawella). Aff. Galduwa. **Maligātenna AS.** Gampaha. Aff. Waturawila. **Mahakanda Purāna AS.** Alawala, Veyangoda. Aff. Waturawila. **Millatākanda AS.** Millate, Kirindiwella. Aff. Waturawila. **Bopetta Viveka S.** Ūrāpola. (Between Nittanbuwa and Kirindiwella.) Aff. Waturawila. **Kolankanda AS.** Diddeniya, Hanwella. Aff. Waturawila. **Katana VMC**, Sri Vimaladhamma Tissa Mawatha, Katana (North). Aff. Kanduboda. **Indigolla MC**, Indigolla, Gampaha. Aff. Kanduboda. **Katuwalamulle MC**, Katuwalamulla, Ganemulla. Aff. Kanduboda. **Mīgahawatta MC**, Mīgahawatta. Aff. Kanduboda. **Nittanbuwa Mahamevṇāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Bandāranayaka Paudgalika Rogala Pāra, Watupitiwala, Nittambuwa. Tel: 033-493-4326. **Horana Mahamevṇāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Āṇamaduwa Mahamevṇāva **Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Dakuṇu Paliyāgama North, Āṇamaduwa. Tel: 032-493-0974. **Kaduwela Bodhingaṇa Mahamevṇāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Rājasingha Mavatha, Heewāgama, Kaduwela. Tel. 011-437-7924. **Mālambee Amawatura Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** 228/1, New Kandy Road, Piṭṭugala, Mālambe. Tel: 011-241-3025 or 011-437-8720. Email: amawatura@gmail.com. Along road from Avissawella, near Colombo. Meditation centre in suburban area. Large meditation and Dhamma hall. **Thai Temple** at Heyantuduwa on Colombo – Pūgoda Road, after Byagama turn right (Kaduwela Bridge).

Kandy City

The ancient capital of the hill country. A fairly large town which is the home of the Temple of the Tooth-Relic (Sri Daladā Māligāva), the headquarters of the Siam Nikāya, and the extensive Peradeniya University, which is nearby. Temperate climate; cool at night.

- Sri Daladā Tapovanaya**, Udawattakelee, Kandy. Tel.: 081-222-5052. Abbot: Ven. Samita. Forest-monastery/temple, 5–15 monks, at the entrance of the Udawattakelee Sanctuary. Foreign monks regularly stay here. Good support, kuṭis and rooms. Clean and tidy. Aff. Tapovana group.
- Forest Hermitage**, Udawattakele, c/o Buddhist Publication Society, PO Box 61, Kandy. Tel: 081-567 1653. The Forest Hermitage was established by Venerable Nyanatiloka Thera and Nyanaponika Thera in 1951. Venerable Nyanaponika lived here for 40 years and founded the BPS. If one wishes to visit, then it is recommended to write or telephone beforehand to the resident bhikkhu, Ven. Nānatusita, or contact the BPS itself (see entry below). Laypeople who wish to visit should get a letter from the BPS that allows them to enter the forest reserve.
- Senanāyaka Ārāmaya**, Udawattakele, Kandy. Situated in the 250 acres Udawattakele Forest Reserve—an ancient royal sanctuary—in the centre of Kandy. It is a small place about 20 minutes walk from the entrance of the forest, where foreign monks regularly stay. Five rooms. No kuṭis. There are usually two Sinhalese monks resident. Good facilities. Clean and tidy. The monks go on piṇḍapāta. Laymen can't stay here. The chief resident monk is Ven. Samithadhamma. Aff. Vajirārāma Group.

Bodhivana Monastery, 160 Dharmashoka Mawatha, Kandy 20000. Tel. 081-4921814. A monastery in a suburb of Kandy (1.5 kms away from the centre of town). The monastery consists of a house with a few rooms near the road, and 4 huts (kuṭis) higher on the slope, near the eastern edge of the Udawattakele. Monks have to go on piṇḍapāta. Abbot: Venerable Kamalasiri.

Potgul Vihāra. Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Kandy. A few kuṭis. Near the Kandy lake and the Temple of the Tooth (Sri Dalidā Māligāva). On slope of Udawattakelee Sanctuary, but noise from road. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here and it can be convenient when visiting the Temple of the Tooth. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Burmese Resthouse. D.S. Senanayaka Mawatha. On the main street near Trinity College. Burmese vihāra on a major street in the centre of Kandy. One or two Burmese monks are residing here. The place is popular with foreign travellers as it is cheap and central.

Primrose Gardens Vajirārāmaya or Kandy Vajirārāmaya. Primrose Gardens, Kandy. Tel. 081-222-5353. Email: vajiraramaya@gmail.com Website: vajiraramayakandy.lk On a hill overlooking Kandy. Pirivena for training novices, 25 at present. Est. in 1981. Provides a Dhamma school for children and involved in social services. Foreigners have stayed here to learn Sinhala. Vajirāmāma group.

Buddhist Publication Society (BPS), PO Box 61, 54 Sangharāja Mawatha, Kandy. Tel: 081-223-7283 or 081-223-8901. Email: bps@bps.lk. Website: www.bps.lk. The BPS, founded by Ven. Nyanaponika in 1958, has a bookshop with a large assortment of Buddhist books in English, Sinhala, and German. There is also a large reference library with books in various languages. Situated along Kandy Lake, a 5 minutes walking east from the Temple of the Tooth.

Kandy District

Nilambe MC, Galaha Rd, Kandy. See Best Places above.

Dhammakuta VMC. Mowbray, Galaha Road. Hindagala, Perādeniya. See Best Places above.

Bowalawatta A. or University Forest Solitude Bowalawatta, Hantāna, nr. Kandy. See Best Places above.

Ulpatkanda A.S. Springhill Watta, Hantāna Estate, no. 27 Hantāna, Kandy. Phone: 081-380-8812. Chief monk: Ariyagavesi. Six kutis and dining hall. In the forest above Bowalawatta Aranya. The road leading to the aranya starts behind the General Hospital in Kandy and goes through a tea estate. The last part of the road is in a bad state and unpaved. The monks speak English and there is a friendly atmosphere. Cool, wet climate. Aff. Galduwa.

Pāramitā International Buddhist Centre. No. 07 Balungala, Kadugannawa, Tel/Fax: 081-257-0732 (office). Website: www.paramitaibc.org A meditation centre situated on the hill above the point where the road from Kandy to Colombo starts going down (near where the old road goes through the rock); 20 kms west of Kandy. Built especially for foreigner meditators by Ven. Bellanwila Dhammaratana from Singapore. Both males and females can stay here. Good facilities and food. Including a meditation Hall, a large library, book store, and 11 comfortable kutis. Teachers occasionally come for visits and sometimes formal retreats are held, but the emphasis is on practising and studying by oneself. There is considerable noise and air pollution from the adjoining Kandy-Colombo highway and railway line. Donation expected from laypeople.

University Vihāra. Perādeniya University, Perādeniya. Tel.:081-238-8975. Vihāra in quiet area on the border of the forest on the hill behind the University. Chief monk: Ven. Santavimala is very kind and helpful. This is a busy place, but there are a few kuṭis in the pine forest behind the Vihara. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Sri Subodhārāma International Buddhist Centre, Eriyagama, Perādeniya 20400. Tel. 081-238-4646 or 081-238-8080. Email: subodhabc@gmail.com. Website: www.subodha.org/home.php. Abbot: Ven. Dhammāvāsa is kind and helpful. A popular Pirivena/Study Centre. Rooms. A few foreign bhikkhus have stayed here. Possibly a good place for learning the Sinhalese language and monk's chanting and customs, etc. Several novices from Bangladesh, Cambodia, etc., stay here. Ambuluwawa Retreat Center, see next entry, is connected to this place. Has a branch in Australia and 2 other branches in the US. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Rock Hill Hermitage International Meditation Centre, Vegirikanda, Hondiyadeniya via Gampola. Tel.: 081-380-1871. Email: info@rockhillsrilanka.com, Website: www.rockhillsrilanka.com. Situated on a mountainside and consists of a monastery, a men's area, a nunnery and a women's area. It has a large meditation hall, a library, some caves and student houses. 10 day meditation courses are held at the beginning of every month. Individual retreats for indefinite periods possible. The teacher, Venerable P. Kassapa, teaches in English and Sinhala.

Sri Sumedha MC. Gomaraya Road, Thawalantenna. Monastery of the popular speaker and healer Bhante Wellawatte Sīlagavesi, who speaks English. Some kuṭis along a mountain stream. East of Wattegama on Knuckles mountain range. Take bus to Gomaraya or Bambara Ella from Wattegama. The monastery is a few kms. below/before Bambara Ella village, near the bridge on the road to Gomaraya.

Sri Dhātu Gallena A. / Sri Daladalena As / Galiha A. Mahāveli Raja Mawatha, Adhikārigama, Gonagantenna, Hanguranketa. 25 kms SE of Kandy on the road to Randenigala Reservoir, less than 1 km from Adhikārigama. On steep mountain-slope. Nice views. Facilities for about 6 monks. Piṇḍapāta possible. A few ancient caves and kuṭis. Some noise from houses and the road in the valley. Aff. Galduwa.

Bo Uyana AS. Pallegama, Nawalapitiya. Ven. Sumanasiri. 2 kms before Nawalapitiya on Kandy-Nawalapitiya Rd. 5 kuṭis. 2 monks. Nice views. Some noise from road and railway in the valley. Aff. Galduwa. **Kundasala Mahamevnawa Asapuwa.** Warapitiya, Kundasalee, MahaNuwara. Tel. 081-495-0182. 8 kms east of Kandy. Connected to Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda. From near Potgul Vihara, in Kandy, catch a bus to Warapitiya and get off at the police station. **Devanapathis International Samatha-Vipassanā Meditation Centre,** Pallakele, Kandy. The centre of the late Ven. Amatagavesi Thera. The place is run by nuns. **Dhammika Puññavaradhanāshramaya.** Makehelwela, Vatteegama, 71411. Aff. Galduwa. **Kadugannawa A.** Possibly a new Galduwa place on the hill behind the Kadugannawa hospital. **Dhammika Puññavaradhanāshramaya.** Makehelwela, Vatteegama, 71411. Aff. Galduwa. **Diyamakanda A.** Liyamagahakotuwa, Handessa. Near the Embekke devale. Small place, 2 monks, caves. Probably connected to Waturawila. **Dumbara Y.** c/o Amila Services. Digana, Rājawella, 20180. On the Kandy-Māhiyangana road. In the Victoria reservoir valley. Small place next to the road so noisy with some English speaking monks. Aff. Galduwa. **Sri Veluvana Y / Devagolla Y.** Devagolla Alupathakada, Uduwela, MahaNuwara 20164. 4 miles along the Kandy-Uduwela Rd. Aff. Galduwa. **Sangharāja Gallena.** Udawela, Upper Division, Hantāna Estate, Kandy 20000. The cave where Saranaṅkara Sangharāja sometimes used to stay in the 18th century. On the road going up behind the general hospital. **Bambaragala.** Digana. An ancient cave monastery on a rocky hill near the Victoria Reservoir. Connected to Asgiriya Siyam Nikāya. Now a village temple, but on the hill there are old caves. **Samādhi Asapuwa.** Mowbray, Galaha Road, Hindagala, Perādeniya. Below Dhammakuta MC.

Kegalla District

Kegalla district is located in the foothills of the central mountains, between Colombo and Kandy.

Salgala AS. Welhella, Galapitamade, Varakāpola. Website: lakdasun.org. From Varakāpola, take a bus to Galapitamade, then get a bus to Salgala or walk 45 mins. About 15 kms south of Varakāpola towards Ruwanwella. Large quiet forest monastery on a mountain-top. One of the first modern forest monasteries, founded in 1934; see *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* p. 175. Well known. Nice kuṭis, including caves. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here for periods. Wet, dense forest with many leeches. Moderate climate. Aff. Waturawila.

Mahakanda Aranya. Three kilometers from Gonagaldeniya. (Midway between Nittanbuwa and Ruwanwella. 12 kms east of Kirindiwella.) One monk. Several kutis and an ancient cave dwelling on a mountain top. One cave has been prepared and is quite nice. Aff. Waturawila. There is a Galduwa monastery lower on the slope of the same mountain.

Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa, Vaduvāva, Yatigaloluva, Polgahāwella. Tel.: 037-224-4602, 037-494-2746 E-mail : info@mahamevnawa.lk. Website: www.mahamevnawa.lk | www.gautamabuddha.org (= 10 kms north of Kegalla. Turn off to Vaduvāva from Yangamodara (3.5 km) on the Alavva-Polgahāwella rd.) The head monastery of the movement around the very popular teacher Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda, an English speaking Dhamma teacher and, most of all, missionary monk who is knowledgeable about the suttas. There are about 80-100 monks in this crowded training centre. The resident monks are friendly and welcoming. The place is very clean and tidy. Behind the public section there are kuṭis in the forest on the hill, but many monks sleep in rooms in compounds and even in the meditation hall. The new Buddha Maligāwa (Buddha Palace) is a major visitor's attraction. There are 48 branch monasteries, including 9 overseas. Well supported. Aff. Kalyāṇavaṃsa Chapter of Amarapura Nikāya.

Mellagala Y. Deewela, Pallegama, 71022. Nr. Kegalla. Tel. 077-915-5295. Take bus from Māwanella to Attanagoda. Used to be a major Galduwa forest monastery, but now somewhat run down. Kuṭis close to each other and noise from valley and road. Aff. Galduwa.

Nārangala Ānandabodhi Āshramaya. Ambalakanda, Aranāyaka (= 15 kms W. of Gampola.) Aff. Galduwa. 3 kuṭis. Some houses nearby, but very little noise from road. Take bus from Māwanella to Ambalakanda or Aranāyaka.

Nāvimana Y. or Varakāpola AS. Varakāpola 71600. 1½ miles along Varakāpola-Mirigama Rd, on top of a hill. In a mahogany tree forest. A lot of noise from the army-camp and the villages below the hill. Aff. Galduwa. **Kodigala Y.** Kehelapannala, Hemmatagama 71530. Between Kegalla and Kandy. 3 kuṭis, one dormitory. No noise. Aff. Galduwa. Bus from Māwanella. **Wewaldeniya AS.** Pahalgama, Wewaldeniya. Near Varakāpola. 6 monks. Aff. to Kandubodha. (Carrithers' *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka*, p. 157 mentions a hermitage founded by Ven. Ratanapāla. It has ancient caves and is situated on a hill top near Asmaṇḍala, near Māwanella.)

Ānanda Bodhi Āshramaya. Pitiyagama, Kirivadunna 71014. (or Hirivadunna?). Nr. Kegalla. Aff. Galduwa. **Navagala AS.** Ambāmpitiya. Near Kegalla, behind Ambāmpitiya factory on hill. Aff. Galduwa. **Nugasevana Senasuna.** Vaharaka, Gonagaldeniya 71304. Aff. Galduwa. **Gallenagoda AS.** Devatagama, Dippitiya, Aranāyaka. Bus from Māwanella. 1 monk & 2 (?) cave kutis with good solitude. **Bodhitenna Y.** Talgamuva, Devanāgala 71527. Between Kegalla and Kandy. Take a bus from Māwanella (between Kandy-Kegalla.) Aff. Galduwa. **Tummodara Y.** Udugama, Hettimula, Kegalla. Aff. Galduwa. **Ānandabodhi Y.** Aranāyaka -20 kms SE of Kegalla. Aff. Galduwa. **Ashokāranya S.** Alavva, Ranawala, Beligalla 71044. On Ranawala-Beligalla Rd, 1 mile from Alavva, on Colombo-Kurunegala Rd. Probably a very small place. Aff. Galduwa. **Koswatta A.** Nava Colombo Para, Polgahawella 60300. (On Colombo-Kurunegala Rd.) Probably a small place. Aff. Galduwa. **Sri Dharmodaya Y.** Manikkava, Hingula 71520. Aff. Galduwa. **Diviyāgala Y.** Randiwela, Karapane. Take bus from Māwanella to Ramukena. Aff. Galduwa. **Kegalla Abhayabhūmi Tapovanaya.** Bandaranāyake Mawatha, Kegalla. Aff. Tapovana group. **Māwanella VMC,** Māwanella. Aff. Kanduboda.

Nuwara Eliya District

The central and highest part of the hill country. Coolest climate in Sri Lanka. Mostly tea estates, but there is some remnant forest on the mountains.

Rahatungoda Y. Hevaheta, 20440. Tel: 052-3814461. 30 kms SE of Kandy. Tea-estate country. Cool climate at about 1100m. altitude. 3 resident monks. Friendly and helpful abbot: Ven. Nyanavimala. 6 nice kuṭis. A few foreign monks have spent *vassa* here. Not far from houses and can be some village-noise. Aff. Galduwa.

Asokārāmaya, Hava Eliya, Nuwara Eliya. Probably the coldest monastery in Sri Lanka. Rooms in compound. Vajiramāma group Amarapura Nikāya. **Nuwara Eliya Temple**. 200m before bus station, on the right. Convenient place if one arrives late and needs somewhere to stay. **Udakirinda BM**. Bogahakumbara, Velimada. Meditation-centre with compound and also a few kuṭis. Mahāsi Method. A few foreigners have stayed here. Mountain area 5 miles south of Keppetipola. Close to Boralanda. Aff. Siyam-nikāya. **Kande Vivekāshramaya**, Ukutule Negenhira (Utukule East), Māturaṭa (3 kms from Padapellala and about 10 kms from Rikilligaskada. Bus from Rikilligaskada to Mātūrata.) One monk: Ven. Suguṇadhamma.

Ratnapura District

The gem district. Some fairly large wilderness areas in the mountains and hills. Warm and humid climate.

Sinharāja Prānta AS. Kadamuduna, Bulutota, between Rakwana and Suriyananda at the 116.5 km post (opposite Christian church), more than 30 kms SE of Ratnapura. On top of a slope on a mountain-range in tea-estate country. Beautiful views. Cool, large dense rain-forest with leeches. Mainly novices, noisy. 1 good kuti. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here. Aff. Waturawila.

Sīlasamāhita YA or **Belihul Oya BM**. Sīlagama, Belihul Oya, 70140. Tel: 045-228-0210. At 156 km post, when going from Balangoda towards Haputale. Chief monk: Ven. Susanta. About 10 monks, a bit of noise from road and hotels below, cool climate and beautiful mountain scenery. Aff. Galduwa.

Tanjan Tenna Area. Gilanhāla, Bhaddeka Vihari Upasthana Kutiya, Tanjan Tenna, Balangoda (Tel.: 045-360-9506) 23km southeast of Balangoda. Like Laggala, group of about 20 monks, also a few foreign monks. About 20 solitary kutis or rock shelters, ranging from simple to comfortable. Chief monk: Venerable Vimalanyana Thera speaks some English and is very helpful. The central meeting place is the Gilanhāla where there is a library (Sinhala and English). The place is popular and it can be a long time before a kuṭi is free. Daily pindapata. The climate in the area is dry and warm. From the Balangoda Bus Stand catch buses either to Kaltota, Weele Oya, Kataragama, Hambegamuwa or Damwelodaya. When traveling by bus, get off at the school bus halt at Tanjan Tenna (23 km post). 10 min. walk past the school to the Gilanhāla. Affiliation: Galduwa.

Śri Nandārāma. Udumulla, Bulatgama, via Balangoda. The late Ven. Balangoda Ānanda's monastery. It has a large library with Ven. Ānanda's large collection of books. A few kuṭis. Situated on a hill-top, scenic views over the mountains. Amarapura Nikāya.

Lellopitiya VBM. Lellopitiya 10 kms E of Ratnapura. The head monk is Ven. Piyananda, the Swejyin Mahānayaka thera and Vinaya ācariya. Quite a large centre, with emphasis on study, well situated. Aff. Kanduboda.

Balangoda VMC. Thotupola-tenna, Balangoda. The head monk is Ven. Mahānāma who is very kind and helpful. Foreign monks have stayed there. A number of kuṭis, well situated atop a hill, good support from local village. Aff. Kanduboda.

Samangiri AS. Varnagala, Eratna 70560. (On Avissawella-Ratnapura road turn left at Kuruwita.) On the base of Sri Pāda mountain. **Sri Pada AS**. Siripāgama, Palabaddala. Aff. Galduwa. **Indolawatta AS or Assagiri YA**. Indolawatta, Ayagama 70024. (= 12 kms west of Ratnapura.) A forest hermitage; Aff.: Galduwa. **Badūwela Kanda Kuṭiya**. c/o Mahindakade, Gangodakanda, Ayagama 70024. (= 12 kms west of Ratnapura.) Aff. Galduwa. **Iluktenna AS**. Panilkanda, Ulliduwāva, Deniyāya. Aff. Waturawila. **Sri Dhammapāla AS**. Kolawenigama, Pallegama, Deniyāya. Aff. Waturawila. **Budulena AS**. Vaturāva, Kalavāna. Aff. Waturawila. **Bambaragala AS**. Galpāya, Pallebedda, Godakawela. Aff. Waturawila. **Samanala AS**. Massenna, Balangoda. Aff. Waturawila. **Bulatwatta Gāllena AS**. Lellopitiya. Aff. Waturawila. **Etugalakanda AS**. Kolandagala, Lellopitiya. Aff. Waturawila. **Merekelē AS**. Paranagama, Ellawala. Aff. Waturawila. **Balangoda Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa**. Uddellapola, Balangoda. Tel: 045 492-7712. **Siripāgama Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa**. Mandagala, Kanegalla, Gilīmalē, Siripāgama, Kuruvita. Tel.: 045-492 7714. (Kuruvita is on the Avissawella-Ratnapura road.) **Eratna Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa**. Dakunu (south) Adhavikanda, Eratna. Tel: 045-492-7713.

Kalutara District

Coastal district. Hot and humid. On the inland hills, where it rains a lot, there are some small wilderness areas.

Kalugala AS. Pahalahevessa, Badureliya, Mātugama. Tel: 034-394-5480. One of the nicest places in Sri Lanka in terms of seclusion and nature. Remotely situated inside a valley surrounded by hills. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here for long periods. Meditative atmosphere & friendly monks. Good vinaya. Kuṭis. Wet, dense forest with many leeches.

Moderate temperature. Not a place which is suitable for beginners. Founded in 1942; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL*, p. 178. Monks from both the Waturawila Vanavāsīn group and the Amarapura Nikāya stay here. From Kalutara take a bus to Mātugama, from there a bus to Badureliya, and then about an hour of walking. Or, when coming from the South along the Gālla-Colombo road, take a bus from Aluthgama to Pelawatta and walk for about 2 ½ hours.

Madakada AS. (Ingiriya A.) Ingiriya. Approx. half way on the Pānadura-Ratnapura Road. Forest in river-gulley. Wet. Abbot: Ven. Mangala is friendly. Good vinaya. About 15 monks. This is the headquarters of a section of the Waturawila group that keeps stricter vinaya standards (not handling money, etc.) and follows the example of the Galduwa group. Aligned with this group are Salgala Aranya and a number of other smaller aranyas.

Bodhināgala A. Approx. half way on the Pānadura-Ratnapura Road, one mile before Ingiriya (see previous entry). There is a sign along the road. When traveling by bus, get off at Bodhināgala Junction, and from there 3 kms walk. Forest monastery. Amarapura Nikāya.

Dharmadvīpa Y. Kalawilawatta, Aluthgama. Near the beach in a mangrove forest at the mouth of the Bentota Ganga. Warm and humid. The head monk, Ven. Sārananda, is very kind and helpful. He is teaching meditation at local ayurveda clinics, etc. A fairly large place, with about 15 monks. There are kuṭīs among the mangroves, but the main attraction of this place is the little rock-island about 50 m. off the beach with a few kuṭīs and a cave. It is accessible only by boat. A few foreign monks have stayed here, but the place is close to the tourist beach. At the 59 km post on Colombo-Gālla Road. When traveling by bus, get off at the Blue Lagoon Hotel or at the big bridge over the Bentota River.

Tundola A. Egodakanda, Polgampala, Mātugama, 12136. Via Mātugama and Agalawatta. Not far from Kalugala. 6 kuṭīs on a hill. Rainforest with many leeches. From Mātugama take Pelwatta bus, get off at Polgampala.

Shri Kalyāna DA. De Abrew Mawatha, Kalutara North 12000. Aff. Galduwa. Spacious compound on beach. No kuṭīs but 3 rooms. Helpful English speaking monk. **Kitulgoda Aranya.** 1 monk. Between Polgampolla and Agalawatta, then 3-4 km walk. Not a practice place. (Near Tundola). **Pūjālena AS.** Kirimetiya, Hedigala 12234. Nelluva – Pellawatta Road, turn off at 13 mile post. Difficult walk. Aff. Galduwa. **Migahatenna BM.** Migahatenna, Siyambalope. (E of Bentota, not far from Kalugala A.) Aff. Galduwa. **Veligalpotta AS.** Yagirala, Avittāwa. (? Kalutara Distr.) Aff. Waturawila. **Bulatsinhala Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Botalēgama, Bulatsinhala. Tel. 034-494-3916. **Serupita Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Serupita Janapadaya, Bolossagama, Kantarata South. Tel: 034-494-3833.

Gālla District

Coastal district. Hot and humid. The headquarters of the forest traditions of Sri Lanka are in this district. Inland there are some fairly large wilderness areas on the hills and mountains such as the Sinharaja National Park. The Sinharaja area is the largest and wettest rainforest in Sri Lanka.

Island Hermitage. Polgasdūva, Dodandūva, 80250. Located on two small forested islands in a tropical lagoon, 10 kms south of the beach resort of Hikkadūva. This famous place was founded by Ven. Nyanatiloka in the early 20th century. There is an large Pali, English, and German library. It used to be a major centre for Western Buddhism, and the first monastery built by and for foreign bhikkhus. About 10 kuṭīs, most with inside and outside walking paths, and electricity. The monks go by boat to the mainland and then on piṇḍapāta daily. The climate is generally humid and hot and there can be a bit of noise from birds, fishermen, and also from temples, etc., around the lake. It can be difficult to visit and write to this place. Monks can try to go. Get off at Ratgama Junction (just south of Dodandūva), go to Katudampe, and ask for Mr Sunil who will arrange for a boat. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Parappadūva Island Hermitage, the neighbouring island (near the Katudampe Pansala village temple) used to be the site of Ayyā Khemā's nuns monastery. Tel.: 091-309-4668. There are 2 monks at present, who are helpful and speak English. Senior monk: Ven. Bodhivaṃsa. The old buildings are being renovated. No piṇḍapāta, but may be possible by arrangement. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Shri Gunavardhana Y. or Galduwa A. Galduwa, Kahava. Between Ambalangoda and Hikkadūva. The headquarters of the Sri Kalyāna Yogāshrāmaya Saṃsthāva, i.e. the main forest monastery tradition in Sri Lanka. Ven. Ariyadhamma was formerly the abbot of this monastery, as well as the head of the Galduwa group, but now lives at Dharmāyatana, Meetirigala. Abbot: Somavaṃsa Thero. This monastery is mainly a training centre for junior monks, a *pirivena*. There are Buddha-Pujas three times a day and the young monks do a lot of study. Many novices, monks and laypeople. Noisy. The climate is hot and humid as it is situated in a palm-estate area on the edge of a coastal swamp. Aff.: Galduwa.

Vanavāsa Sangha Mūlasthānaya or Waturawila A. Waturawila, Tibbotuwewa, Kahadūva. About 20 kms northeast of Hikkadūva. The headquarters of the Waturawila group. One section is a large *pirivena* with many novices; the other section is a forest-monastery. Aff. Waturawila.

Kottāva Nāga A. or Nāga A. Kottāva, Kottagama. 12 kms E of Gālla. Take bus to Udagama from Gālla and get off at Kottāva junction. About 50 acres of forest on small hills with a stream running through it. Fairly quiet. Warm & humid. Several kuṭīs. At present the Austrian bhikkhu Ven. Nāṇasanta, who was formerly at the Island Hermitage, is residing here. Aff. Waturawila.

Tripitaka DA. (Koggala A.). Vedduwa, Koggala, Habarādūva 80630. 10 kms SW of Gālla. Abbot: Ven. Anuruddha. Originally a meditation monastery, but it is now more study orientated. The monastery comprises of a number of buildings and nice kuṭis situated on a small raised elevation of land jutting out into a lagoon and approached by a causeway. There are crocodiles in the lagoon. Hot and humid. Piṇḍapāta possible. Aff. Galduwa.

Diviyāgala AS. Kosgoda 80570. 10 kms south of Bentota. The headmonk, Ven. Dhammasīla Mahāthera, has been a long time resident of Nissarana Vanaya. Quiet, nice patch of forest, about 6 monks. Good kuṭis. At times hot and humid. Good library, also English books. Good food and vandana in the evening. Forest hermitage. Aff.: Galduwa.

Opāta A. / Rajavangala A. Senanayaka Rd, Opāta, Akuressa, 81442. 30 kms SE of Gālla. Nice monastery in forested hilly area with streams. Ven. Suguṇasāra, a meditation teacher in Pa Auk tradition, helpful and friendly, is staying here. Wet, but not overly hot climate. Take an Akuressa bus from Gālla and then the Udugama or Thawalama bus. Get off at Opāta. About 3 kms from Opāta. Aff. Galduwa.

Sinhalena Tapovanaya. Kosmulla, Neluva 80082. About 50 kms NE of Gālla, 30 kms E of Ambalangoda. Abbot: Ven. Jinavaṃsa. A small forest monastery on the western edge of the large Siṅharāja Rainforest National Park. Dense rainforest with streams and waterfalls etc. Wet and humid, leeches, moderately cool climate. To get here, take a bus from Gālla to Neluva and then walk for about 2 hours up a mountain through the tea-plantations. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here. Aff. Tapovana Group.

Deldūva A. In the Ambalangoda area. The headquarters of the Deldūva forest division of the Rāmañña Nikāya.
Suddellāva AS. Ihalahewessa, Pitigala. (10 kms NE from Elpitiya) This is supposed to be a nice place, beautifully situated, but a little tough. Aff. Waturawila. **Uluvahugala AS.** Mavita, Neluva, 80082. Nr. Neluva; see Sinhalena Tapovanaya entry above. Forest Hermitage. Aff. Galduwa. **Vihāragoda Viveka Senasenaya,** Vihāragoda, Vatugedara 80340. Ambalangoda area. Aff. Galduwa. **Vivekārāmaya.** Godakanda, Karapitiya. Just outside Gālla town. Aff. Galduwa. **Shri Nāṇabhasara Y.** Ihala Dickson Pāra, Gālla 80000. Aff. Galduwa. **Sri Kalyāṇā DA.** Lawallena Watta, Baddegama 80200. (= 10 kms east of Hikkadūva.) Aff. Galduwa. **Nāgala A.** Eppala, Panangala. 80075. Near Sinharaja National Park. Aff. Galduwa. **Sītaladela AS.** Nākiyādeniya Watta, Pilidola Koṭasa, Nākiyādeniya. Aff. Waturawila. **Nugagala AS.** Yālagala, Hiniduma, Udugama. Remote forest monastery. Aff. Waturawila. **Digālena AS.** Naravel Ketiya, Piṭuwala, Elpitiya. Aff. Waturawila. **Attuwagala AS.** Attuwagala. About 4 kms from Elpitiya. Friendly old abbot, but lack of food. Aff. Waturawila. **Diwankaralena AS.** Dūva Piṭuwala, Elpitiya. Aff. Waturawila. **Viveka S.** Agalia, Baddegama. (= 10 kms east of Hikkadūva.) Waturawila?

Mātara District

Coastal district. Hot and humid. Some small wilderness areas, but generally developed. Flat land along coast, inland some hills.

Shri Rohana Y./Puhulwella A. Puhulwella, Hakmana 81390. 15 kms E of Mātara. Ask the way at from Mātara. Well-known and well supported place. Kuṭis in 2 lines up forested hill. Comfortable place, about 10 monks. Some sound from village. Warm and humid. Founded in the early 1950's; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL* p.218. Aff. Galduwa.

Ellakanda AS. Kekanadura 81020. 10 kms E of Mātara. Abbot: Ven. Sudhamma. A very calm thera with learning and experience in meditation. A meditation centre situated in a state forest on a peninsula surrounded by a reservoir. Foreign monks have stayed here. 15–20 monks. Good kuṭis. Warm, humid, dense forest. There is only one meal a day and there are group meditation sittings. Catch Yatiyana bus from Matara and get off at Apatenna. Aff. Galduwa. Has a branch, **Pasādika A.,** at Walasmulla which offers more seclusion.

Kirinda A. Kirinda. 15 kms NE of Mātara. Old forest on a hill. A historical place, as it is the oldest continually occupied forest monastery in Sri Lanka, founded by Ven. Paññānanda, the founder of the Rāmañña nikāya, in the early 1850's; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL*, p. 69f. Aff. Deldūva. **Baṭuvita A.** Baṭuvita. A few miles from Puhulwella A. The second oldest forest monastery in Sri Lanka; see Kirinda A. above. Aff. Deldūva.

Tummodara AS. Kandambigoda, Parapāmulla, Hakmana. (20 kms NE of Mātara). Aff. Waturawila. **Gallabadakanda AS.** Moravaka. Aff. Galduwa. **Aharagala AS.** Dellawa, Morawaka 81477. Approx 30 kms N of Mātara. Forest hermitage. Aff.: Galduwa. **Gallena-vihāraya.** Addarakanda, Rambukana, Morawaka. Affiliation unknown. **Nigrodhārāmaya S.** Vaturava, Beliatta, Kumbara Post Office 70456.(= 30 kms E of Mātara.) Hermitage. Aff. Galduwa. **Rammala AS.** Rammala, Varāpitiya, Walasmulla. (= 30 kms NE of Mātara.) Aff. Waturawila. **Pasādika A.,** a branch of Ellakanda AS. Close to Walasmulla. Offers more seclusion. Aff. Galduwa. **Vavulagala AS.** Vavulagala Vatuyāya, Hawupe, Imaduwa. 4 monks, mosquitoes Aff. Waturawila. **Siri Sugata T.** Poratota, Akuressa. Aff. Waturawila. **Dediyagala AS.** Dediyaḡala, Maliduwa, Akuressa. Aff. Waturawila. **Yogashrāmaya,** Wehella, Dikwella. Affiliation unknown.

Hambantota District

Probably the driest district in Sri Lanka, especially along the coast. Hot. Some large wilderness areas such as Yala. Generally flat land, but there is the Vedahitakanda near Kataragama.

Nimalāva AS. Kirinda, Tissamahārāmaya 82614. 12 kms SE of Tissamahārāmaya. About 3 kms walking from Kirinda on the way to Yala National Park. Founded in 1951; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL*, p. 212. Abbot: Ven. Dhammadassī, a very strict Mahāthera. A large forest monastery. It is rather hot in the dry season. Ancient cave kuṭis under

boulders in the jungle. It is bordering Yala National Park and therefore there are elephants and other wildlife such as crocodiles. Foreign monks have stayed here. There is chanting/vandana 3 times a day, but one can be exempted. About the driest climate in Sri Lanka. The piṇḍapāta starts at 9 am (About 25–30 minutes, the monks are usually driven back.) A new retreat centre with 7 restored rock shelters, called Tammana, is less than 1 km, about 15–20 minutes walking, from the original centre, the piṇḍapāta taking consequently that much longer. One can stay there and only have breakfast at the Nimalāva monastery. Usually only one monk stays in Tammana. From here it is worthwhile to visit the ancient forest monastery of Situlpāva in Yāla National Park; see next entry. Aff. Galduwa.

Situlpāva. Accessible from Tissamahārāma, Kirinda, or Kataragama. It is easiest to walk along the access-road from Tissa and get a lift with the pilgrim-buses or jeeps going there. From Nimalāva go to main (Kirinda-road) National Park entrance and then take the boundary track north to the Tissa entrance. A large, ancient cave-monastery. There are ancient ruins and probably more than a hundred cave-kuṭis situated on and along large 70 meter high granite boulders sticking out of the jungle. It is mentioned in a Sinhalese Buddhist song as a place where there were so many arahants flying in the sky that they obscured the sunlight and the farmers could not grow their crops. The incumbent monk of the place is Ven. Hemaratana thera, a Siyam Nikāya temple monk who speaks English well. Forest monks can stay in the cave kutis (after asking permission from head monk.) Food can be gotten from the temple and from pilgrims who come to see the stupas and ruins. There are many animals, some are dangerous, including elephants. There are also a few rest-houses where laypeople can stay. About mid-way between the Tissa entrance and Situlpāva there is a smaller abandoned ancient aranya called Makulvihāra under a large boulder.

Madunāgala A. Koggala. 15 kms north of Ambalantota, east of Siyambalagoda, north of Ridiyagama Wewa. An ancient cave monastery on a remote, quiet forested rock-outcrop ridge, northeast of Ridiyagama Wewa, and surrounded by shrubby lowland. Hot, dry climate. Founded in 1946 by the founder of the Waturawila Vanavāsin group, Waturawila Nāṇananda; see *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* p. 184. About 10 cave kutis. There is a cetiya on top of one of the big boulders. Aff: Waturawila. Nearby, about 15 mins. walking to the southwest, is another monastery called Karambagala Aranya; see next entry. To get here, take a bus from Ambalantota (at the clocktower) to Koggala and walk about 7 kms. There are also buses to Suriyawewa, which come closer (3 kms) but are less frequent. From Embilipitiya, take a bus to Suriyawewa and get out at Mahāpelesa, then walk about 7 kms to the monastery, passing the hot springs, and take the road to the east of the ridge. At night, elephants roam in the jungle.

Karambagala A. This monastery, including Madunāgala, was founded in King Gotrabhaya's time and the monks claim that it is the Kuraṇḍaka Monastery of the arahant Cittagutta, whose cave, mentioned in the *Visuddhimagga* (Ch. 1 § 104ff) is now the shrine room. The monastery was refounded early in the 20th century. There are many rock overhangs on this rocky hill. Some have been converted into kutis. On top of the 100 m high hill is a cetiya. In 2006 the place was inhabited by one 29 year old bhikkhu and 18 young novices.

Bundala Kuṭi. A single kuṭi near the village of Bundala, Hambantota district. For lovers of solitude. In dune-shrubland in the Bundala National Park near the sea. There are a few elephants in the forest. The kuṭi was built for Ven. Nāṇavira in the late fifties. He died in 1965 and since then many foreign bhikkhus have stayed here. Piṇḍapāta in the village, which is about 10 minutes away. Dry hot climate. PTS Pali Tipitaka books are kept in the main dayaka's house in the village. There is some noise from the nearby road and waves crashing on the beach.

Sīmāpavura AS. Sūriya Āra, Angunukolapelessa, Thanāmalwila. Abbot: Ven. Jinasara. On top of rock-hill with good views. Small place with 3 kuties (solar). One cave-kuṭi. Very hot. Angunukolapelessa is 10 kms west of Tanāmalwila, which is halfway on the Tissamahārāma-Wellawāya Rd. Aff. Waturawila.

Vedahitakanda. Kataragama. There is a long climb to an abandoned cave kuṭi on the peak next to the temple on Vedahitakanda. A swiss monk stayed here for some years. **Usgala A.** Suriyawewa (Andarawewa). 10 km Northeast of Karambagala. There are three small rock overhangs and a few mud kutis. Three novices from Karambagala A. stay at this rocky outcrop. **Mattala A.** A new aranya with rock overhangs near Badagiriya Wewa, 10 kms north of Hambantota and Bundala. Perhaps near the village of Udamattala, north of the wewa. Aff. unknown. **Svarnagiri AS.** Laginagala, Galhiramankada, Kotaweramankada, Tanāmalwila 91312. 1 monk. About 30 km from Sīmāpavura, north of Hambegamuva on the road to Balangoda. Aff. Galduwa. **Karandulena AS.** Ridiyagama. Aff. Galduwa. It is unclear whether there is a monk here and where it is. **Walaskanda AS.** 31 Kanuva, Kitulkoṭe, Tanāmalwila. 1 monk. Not a practice place. Not far from Sīmāpavura. Aff. Waturawila. **Suriyawewa Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Suraviregama, Suriyawewa. Tel. 047–492-0660. **Kataragama Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Peragirigama, Kataragama. Tel. 047–493-1377.

Haputale District / Uva province

The southern edge of the hill country. Cool climate and spectacular views over the southern lowland. Mostly tea and vegetable estates.

Kolatenna Hermitage, Bandārawela. A place founded by the Czech monk, Ven. Nyānasatta, in the 1960's where foreign bhikkhus stayed for a long time, but at present the only residents are Sinhalese bhikkhus. Rooms for about 6 persons, good library. Piṇḍapāta. Some noisy dogs. Not very clean. Over 1000m altitude, cool climate. Surrounded by village and tea-estates on a mountain-slope above village-areas. Noise from temples, an army-camp, and the

surrounding villages. From Bandārawela walk approx. 2 kms on the upper Haputale Road, then at the railway crossing turn to the right, or walk along the railway line from Bandārawela. Aff. Galduwa.

Shri Nāṇārāma Vivekāshramaya / Kahagolla A./ Sambodhi A. Close to Kahagolla, Diyatalāva 90150. 5 kms SW of Bandārawela, Badulla District. Above 1000m, cool, nice climate. Rooms in a communal building. In village area, near army-camp. Can be noisy. Aff. Galduwa.

Piyangala A. Velihellagama, Diyatalāva 90150. Small aranya with a few kuṭis on a slope with pineforest in a quiet river-valley 4 kms south of Diyatalāva. Cool climate. Probably a few monks from Kahagolla are residing here, ask the way at Kahagolla A. Cave nearby.

Kalyāṇī Yogāshrama. Nikapitiya, Gampaha, near Koslanda. Bus from Wellawāya, Uva Province. 200 acres of forested land. Still undeveloped due to lack of funds. Only one hut. Cave nearby (20 min. walk). Not as high as Haputale, but still has a pleasant climate with cool nights. Aff. Galduwa.

Bandārawela Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa. Kumbalwela, Bandārawela. Tel. 057-492-6447. Monastery on the slope of a remote tea estate on a steep mountain about 10 km from Bandārawela on the road to Badulla (Not Ella). Kutis, with covered walking paths along a road going through the tea estate. No electricity. Nice views; cool climate.

Monarāgala District

There are many small aranyas in this undeveloped area, with limited support and water, and facilities for only a few monks. Hot climate with a dry season. Mountains, hills, and flat land.

Budugal-lena AS. 23 km post, New Katarama Road, Vaguruwela, [14, Kanuwa Raja Mawatha] Buttala 91100. Tel: 055-355-2900. The abbot is Ven. Dhammarakkhita. Good support. Practice of Pa Auk method. Jungle on the slope of a hill. Hot climate. Caves, including a big cave used for doing vandana. Quiet. Good food. Close to Yala so there are wild animals. Electricity. Aff. Galduwa.

Tarulenagala A. / Habutugala A. Hulannuge, Monarāgala 71000. Between Siyambalanduwa and Lahugala National Park, along Monarāgala-Pottuvil Road. Small place with a large rockshelter with an ancient lying Buddha statue and Vedha drawings. On top of the hill is the Yodalena, supposedly the longest rockshelter in SL, about 200 m. long. There are also other caves. Take a bus from Monaragala. If you pass the Lahugala National Park to the east then look out of the bus as there are usually several elephants grazing in the marshes. Aff. Galduwa.

Sambodhi Y. 35 Kumaradola Pāra, Monarāgala 910000. On hill above Monarāgala bus-stand. Convenient as a stop-over place on a long bus-journey. Aff. Galduwa. **Alulena AS.** Dambepitiya 91060. Near Maligawila, 10 kms SE of Buttala. Aff.: Galduwa. **Lollehela AS.** Galgediyawa, Galabedda, Monarāgala 91008. Outside Monarāgala Town. Aff. Galduwa. **Sitakanda AS.** Monarāgala 91000. Aff. Galduwa. **Vallagambā Rājaleña AS.** Helatungala, Badalkumbura, Monarāgala 91070. Aff. Galduwa. **Sandekabelle AS.** Kanda-uda-vanguva, Monarāgala 91032. 1 kms from town on the Kumardola Pāra, turn off at the Water Supply Dept. Aff. Galduwa. **Sakmangala AS.** Kumaradola Pāra, Monarāgala 91000. Located on Monarāgala Mountain. 10 kms from town via Kumardola Pāra. At present no monks. Aff. Galduwa. **Vattārāma AS.** Wattārāma, Kotiyagala, Monarāgala, 91024. 1 monk & 6 novices. Quiet. Aff. Galduwa. **Rahatan Kanda AS / Devagiri AS.** Dahatune Kanuva, Mahagodayaya, Buttala. Aff. Waturawila. **Theraputtabhaya AS.** Kalawela Aragama Pāra, Wellawāya. Aff. Waturawila. **Mayuragiri AS.** Veliyaya, Monarāgala. Aff. Waturawila. **Buduruwvagala,** village temple. 1 hour walk to rock carvings. South of Wellavāya. **Bhavanagala AS.** Punehipara, Etimole Wewa. Aff. Waturawila. **Maha Tissa Lena AS.** Netol Kele, Ella Pāra, Wellawāya. Aff. Waturawila. **Wewatenna AS.** Dahate Kanuva, Rattanadeniya, Bibile Road, Bakinigahawela. Aff. Waturawila. **Buttala Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Buttala, 5 Kanuwa, Buttala Road, Badalkumbura. **Monarāgala Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Tambalavinna-āra Tapovanaya, Hulandāva Dakuṇa (South), Monarāgala. Tel. 055-492-8318.

Badulla district

The eastern edge of the mountain country. Cool climate with less rain than the western and central mountains. Tea estates with some remnant forest and wilderness areas. Strangely enough, there seem to be no aranyas or meditation centres in this district. The low country east of the mountains around Bibile is also part of this district. This area has a hot climate and a dry season.

Mahasuddharshana AS. Gadugodawewa, Pahala-oya-gama, Ūraniya. (Between Mahiyangana and Bibile). Aff. Waturawila.

Nilagala. An ancient cave monastery with 4-5 kuṭis on a big rock outcrop 20 kms. east of Bibile. Near nature reserve. Aff. Galduwa.

Ampāra District

This area has a lot of ancient monasteries, but due to the former armed conflict they were not redeveloped or were abandoned. Now most of the area is accessible again and some ancient monasteries are being developed again, notably Kudumbigala A. There is a lot of wilderness in this area. It has a hot climate and a dry season.

Kudumbigala Mahā Tapovanaya. Heleva Eliya, Pānama. Tel.: 068-567-4944. Near Okanda, 15 kms south of Pānama. At 12 km post there is a sign, then 3kms inland from main road. Ancient cave monastery. New abbot: Ven. Buddhavaṃsa is very friendly and helpful. Very good place for individual practice with optional pujas. Spectacular setting on the eastern border of Yala National Park, very remote, caves, wild animals. The monastery had gone through a difficult period due to the violent death in 1989 of its founder Ānandasiri during the Marxist uprising and then the conflict in the East. It was uninhabited during 1999–2001 due to the presence of Tamil Tigers. Pictures and a history of the place and its founder can be found in Carrithers' *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka*. About 10-15 monks or novices at present. 15 caves are prepared. Recently, much work, which is ongoing, has been done to improve the water supply, rebuild kutis and a new dining hall. etc. Water can be a problem and at present 20 min. walk to bathe. There are other abandoned ancient monasteries in jungles in the area, such as Bambaragastalāva. To get here, take a bus from Monarāgala to Pottuvil or Pānama. One can either walk, or get a lift with a bus or private vehicle going to the Monastery or Okanda. About an hours walk to the coast at Okanda, with large beaches, a Kataragama Deva shrine, and the new Kumana National Park Headquarters and Museum. Aff. Galduwa.

Shastrawella A. Between Pānama and Pottuvil. Get off the bus at the army camp. Ancient cave monastery on forested rocky hill ridge which runs east from the army camp up to the the mouth of the Heen Oya River. Abandoned pansala. One cave is high on a rock overlooking Ārugam Bay, but is not suitable due to visiting tourists. Elephants and other wildlife, and little noise, but the pansala area can be noisy with villagers. Near Pānama are other ancient abandoned cave monasteries including Wewavehera near the reservoir (*wewa*) 3 kms west of Pānama.

Buddhangala A. 22 Kanatta Rd. Ampāra. Ancient site, but no caves except the dāna sala. Pilgrims come. Somewhat like Nimalāva A. 10 monks. Good kutis. Hot. Nice views. Elephants nearby. Ramanya Nikāya.

Sumangala A. Kohombana, via Uhana. Huge caves on rocky hill. Quite remote; a 4 kms walk to the nearest village. Good solitude. Two monks at present, but there is a police post and the place is supported by the army.

Negombo and Chilaw Area

Coastal area known for its beaches. Popular with tourists. Predominately Christian area. Hot and humid.

Polwatta BM / Sri Dharmodaya BM. Industries Estate, Polwatta, Minuvangoda, Ekala 11380. Near Ja Ela between Colombo and Negombo. About 1–2 acres with buildings on industrial palm estate. Not so suitable for meditation. Aff. Galduwa. **Kocchikade Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Chilaw Road Kocchikade. Tel: 031-493-6016. (North of Colombo.) **Huṇumulla Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Badalagama Pāra, Huṇumulla. Tel: 031-493-6104. **Ranaketugala AS.** Tutiriwela, Bandar, Koswatta 60424. Aff. Galduwa. 20 kms N of Negombo. **Nekkawila VMC,** Nekkawila, Chilaw. Aff. Kanduboda.

Kurunegala District

There are many aranyas and monasteries in Kurunegala district. The better known ones are Nā-Uyana A. and Arankele A. People in this district are known for their strong faith. Warm climate. Hills and flatland. There are wilderness areas on and around the hills. On every hill in this area there are likely to be ancient cave kuṭis.

Na Uyana AS. Pansiyagama. See Best Places section above.

Arahatta Māliyadeva AS. or **Arankele A.** Arankele, Kumbukwewa, Kurunegala District. On the site of the medieval Paṃsakula Sect monastery, about 15 or more kuṭis and caves. Good library with a few English books. A few foreigners have stayed here. This is the ancient cave monastery where the Sinhalese arahant Māliyadeva lived, thus the name *aran* (arahant) + *kele* (forest). His simple cave can still be visited. It is an archeological site with extensive ruins of an old monastery. About 10 monks (some speak English). From Kurunegala, take a bus towards Madagalla, and get off at Bodagalla. Amarapura Nikāya.

Ruvangirikanda A. Karagahagedara, Nārammala 60106. 15 kms SW of Kurunegala, 7 kms from Nārammala to Junction, then about 8 kms from the main road. Forested hill with a nice cave-kuṭi on top with a good view and walking path. Also other cave-kuṭis and ordinary kuṭis. Good walking paths. Foreign monks have stayed here. Quiet and suitable for meditation. Aff. Galduwa.

Nāthagane AS. Mahākeliya, Māspota 60344. 10 kms from Kurunegala on the Puttalam Road. 10 min. walk from main road. Abbot: Ven. Sirivimala. Forested hill-side. About 10–12 kuṭis. Some isolated caves. Friendly atmosphere. Suitable for meditation, but also a study/training place for young monks. Some noise from road. Aff. Galduwa.

Siri Vidusarana T. / Nabeta A. Henegedera Landa, Nabeta 60540. Nr. Melsiripura on Kurunegala–Dambulla Rd. Nice forest. Small monastery. 1 km to main-road but fairly quiet. Facilities for 4–5 monks. 1 cave kuti. There can be a lack of water during the dry season. Aff. Galduwa.

Nāgolla A. also known as: **Devahuva A.** or **Gomoktāva A.** Nāgolla, Bulanawewa, Devahuva, Galēwela 21206. (On Kurunegala-Anurādhapura Rd.). Turn off at the Mosque and then walk along the cart road to the aranya. An ancient cave monastery on a large hill. A few monks. Ancient cetiya. Forest with iron-wood-trees and big rocks. Small monastery with only a few kutis and caves. Aff. Galduwa.

Dolukanda A. / Rankotlena AS. Dolukanda, Hunupola, Nikadalupotha 60582. Not far from Arankele Aranya in Kurunegala District. Ancient Cave Monastery. On lower forested slope of the Dolukanda mountain. (The ancient Arankele monastery is on the other side of the mountain.) A few big caves. On top of the mountain, which is a long climb, there is a partly forested plateau with an ancient palace and fortress; the bathing pond can still be seen. There is a cave and nearby kuti on one side of the plateau. Coming from Arankele, first go to Hiripitiya, then 7 km from there. Aff. Galduwa.

Jathika Namal Uyana. Upalathagama, Galkiriyagama, Madatugama. Small aranya *cum* pansala on a hill in a fairly large forested area. Ancient stupa and ruins. Rose-quartz rock-outcrops. The abbot, Ven. Vanavasi Rāhula, is trying to protect the quartz. 10 kms north from Devahuva A. (see above this section.)

Diddeniya A, or Rangirikanda A. Diddeniya, Melsiripura 60544. Turn off at Melsiripura. Close to Nā Uyana. Ancient cave monastery on a rocky hill. Abbot: Ven. Ñāṇasīla, an English speaking Vinayadhara. Popular training place for new monks with a daily schedule. Facilities for about 30 monks. Cramped (monks have to share kutis), but well kept. About 7 km North of Melsiripura. ½ hr walk from bus stop. Aff. Galduwa.

Ridivihāra Kelepansala. Cave kuti on a forested hill about half an hour walk from this ancient vihāra belonging to the Malwatta Nāyaka thera. Fairly quiet. Piṇḍapāta to nearby village. There are also several other caves in the forest. The abbot of Ridi Vihāra needs to be consulted if one wishes to stay here. From Kurunegala take the Kepitigolla bus and get out at the Ridivihāra Devāla and walk to Ridivihāra. Aff. Siyam Nikāya.

Bambaragala MC. Moratiya. On the Kurunegala–Kepitagolla Rd. Less than 10 kms from Kurunegala. A place set up as a meditation centre, but the founder went abroad. Kuṭis and a large unfinished Dhamma-hall on a forested hill.

Minnettiya A. Māspota, Mahakeliya. In the area of Variyapola on the Kurunegala–Puttalam Rd. 1 cave kuṭi with one monk. Near village. Aff. Galduwa. **Pahankanuva A.** Kandededera, Maharacchimulla. Maybe aff. to Kandubodha. **Vevgala A.** Vevgala, Kurunegala. Aff. Galduwa. **Etugala AS.** Etugala, Kurunegala 60000. Hermitage near huge Buddha statue on mountain above Kurunegala. Close to antennas. No monks at present. Aff. Galduwa. **Sudarshana Y.** Gantiriyāva, Bamunākotuwa 60347. 5 kms NW of Māspota, near Variyapola on the Kurunegala–Puttalam Rd. Aff. Galduwa. **Rambapokuna AS.** Kandededera, Nikaweratiya 60470. (= Midway on the Kurunegala–Puttalam Rd. Aff. Galduwa. **Dandūvāva AS.** Danduwwa, Nikaweratiya 60470. Aff. Galduwa. **Banakiyangama Y./Sri Kalyāṇī Shaka Y.** Banakiyanagama, Mūnamaldeniya 60218. 10 kms along Kuliypitiya–Hettipola Rd, Kurunegala District. Aff. Galduwa. **Sri Tampanṇi A.** Weluwewa. Navagattagama 61520. 15 kms W of Galgamuva. Aff. Galduwa. **Kappetigala AS.** Galneva, Tuttiripitiyagama 60426. (= 10 kms NE of Māho.) Aff. Galduwa. **Nāgansole AS.** Ratandala Oya, Nikaweratiya 60470. 3 miles along Nikaweratiya–Hidogama Rd. Aff. Galduwa. **Nammuvagama AS.** Sindagamdaluva, Nikaweratiya 60470. Aff. Galduwa. **Hidogama AS.** Mahagirilla. Along Nikaweratiya–Māho Rd. 2 miles to Mahagirilla then to Hidogama. Aff. Galduwa. **Yahangala AS.** Delvahuva, Galēwela 21206. Aff. Galduwa. **Kodigala AS.** Polpitigama. Approx. 40 kms north of Kurunegala and 10 kms E of Māho. Aff. Waturawila. **Sudarshanapura VMC,** Sudarshanapura, Mavatagama. Aff. Kanduboda. **Telandapitiya,** Tarangollagama, Maragolla Bazar. 10 kms from Migalāva. Caves and kuṭis. Aff. unknown. **Ibbāgamuva Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Mūkalanyāya, Ibbāgamuva. Tel: 037-494-2743. **Polpitigama Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Polpitigama. Tel. 037-494-2741 **Mahamevnāva Anāgārika Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** 7 Kanuva, Seafeld Watta, Māwattagama. Tel: 037-224-3698. **Potugura Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Algama, Potugura. Tel: 037-494-2742 **Uyandana Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Uyandana, Kurunegala. Tel: 037-494-2744.

Mātale District

The northern part of the hill and mountain country. Some large wilderness areas.

Laggala Forest Area. There are a number of kuṭis with excellent seclusion in the large wilderness area between the eastern slopes of the Knuckles Mountain Range (Dumbara Kanda), E of Mātale, and the Vasgamuva National Reserve, SW of Polonnaruwa. Conditions are simple and sometimes tough. Open 3 wall kuṭis and caves, small remote villages, sometimes long and rough piṇḍapāta routes and very simple food, elephants, leopards, and bears. A place for those who are lovers of intense solitude and who are experienced in bhāvana. This is not a place for newcomers and inexperienced monks. The villagers do not know English. Ven. New Zealand Guttasīla, who lives in the area, may be able to help newcomers. For photographs of this area see: Nyanatusita Picasa Album.

Gallenawatta AS. Etābendiwewa Pāra, Pannampitiya. Caves on the base of a hill. Kuṭis close to each other, but there are many other caves in this area. A few bhikkhus and several novices. Further on the road there are ancient ruins. Turn left off the Mātale–Dambulla Rd about 8 kms before Dambulla, then about 1.5 kms. Aff. Waturawila.

Enderagala S. Palwehera, Dambulla (6 kms north of Dambulla, on Habarana Rd.). This is now the headquarters of a small group of monasteries split off from Waturawila. Mihindu A. in Mahintale, and Ritigala A. are affiliated with this group.

Pidurangala. Pidurangala Rājamahāvihāra, Pidurangala, Sīgiriya. Less than a km E of Sīgiriya rock, near ancient monastery ruins. It can be reached by leaving Sīgiriya through the Northern Gate. Several ancient cave kuṭis under a large boulder-hill in the Sīgiriya forest above a well kept village temple. Some kutis have been prepared under the rocks, but might not have been used for a number of years as the pivvena is not a meditation centre. The friendly

head monk will be supportive if one wishes to stay in one of the caves. Near the top of the boulder there is an ancient reclining Buddha image. From Habarana get off at Inamalava Junction.

Sri Jinavamsa Y. Mātale Road. Elkadūva 21012. Temple near road and town. Rooms in compound. Aff. Galduwa.

Lunu-atuwa A. Udutenna 21006. Mātale–Godapola, Alwatta. About 5–8 kms outside Mātale by bus. Large cave used as vihāra. Facilities for only a few monks. Aff. Galduwa.

Cetiya Giriya, Maningamuva, Pallepola. On a rocky hill 20 kms NW of Mātale. Moderately cool climate. Small place, only 2 or 3 monks. A few kuṭis and caves. Some distance away there are two independent caves. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Watagala BM, Watagala, Moragaha Ulpata, Vilgamuva 21000. Near Laggala, Hettipola. Caves and kuṭis. Aff. Galduwa.

Gallena AS. Vewalawewa, Dambulla. Aff. Waturawila. **Rangirigama AS.** Rangirigama, Dambulla. Aff. Waturawila.

Nāgolla Nadī S. Nāgala Wewa, Kimbissa, Dambulla. Aff. Waturawila. **Dambulla VMC,** Kalundeva Road, Dambulla. Aff. Kanduboda. **Samādhi Tapovanaya.** Tambarā–Valiya Road. Aluvihāra, Mātale. Cave–kuṭis. **Mātālē Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Madawala Ulpata, Mātālē. Tel. 066-492-8484. **Rattota Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Ganetenna, Rattota, Mātālē. About 10kms east of Mātālē. Tel. 066-492-8483.

Batticaloa District

Some areas in the eastern district of Batticaloa have not been accessible for a long time due to the armed conflict. There are some nice ancient Buddhist sites on the hills in this district. Hot climate with dry season. Undeveloped and poor. Inland there are some large wilderness areas.

Piyangala AS. Rājagalatenna 32068. Near Mayadunna, near Bakiella. North of Uhana, midway along the Amapara–Maha Oya Road. 25 kms southwest of Batticaloa. Large forest area (1 square mile) bordering a wildlife sanctuary and the extensive ruins of the ancient Rājagala monastery situated on top of the mountain, which is a few kms. away from the aranya. Some caves. One bhikkhu and one novice are staying here. The place is run down and near to houses and a road. Aff. Galduwa.

Veheragala A. Maha Oya. Midway on the Mahiyangana–Batticaloa Road. Ancient cave monastery on a hill, about 1 km from the Maha Oya hot springs. This aranya was abandoned after a hurricane destroyed the buildings in the late eighties. No monks at present. There are 4 caves kuṭis which are inhabitable. Near houses, but on edge Maduru Oya National Park.

Omuna A. Ancient cave monastery in Maduru Oya National Park, about 10 km further along the road from Veheragala. Some caves apparently have been restored in recent times, but there are no monks at present. On the way to here from Veheragala is the Hīnagala cave.

Nuwaragala. Ancient monastery site with caves on spectacular rock formations. No monks or modern buildings. Best to access from northern, Maha Oya side.

Polonnaruwa District

The second ancient capital of Sri Lanka. There are quite a few ancient monasteries on the hills and rocks in this area. Hot climate with dry season. Low country with some hills and rock-outcrops. Some large national parks. An undeveloped and poor area.

Mahāsena AS. Nagalakanda, Minneriya 51410. 25 kms northwest of Polonnaruwa. Nice forest on a large hill. The site of an ancient monastery with ancient ruins and statues. Nice views from the top of the hill. Good kuṭis and walking paths. Facilities for about 6–8 monks. Friendly abbot. Aff. Galduwa.

Sinhapura VMC. Sinhapura, Polonnaruwa. Head Monk: Ven. Saṃvuta. 2 or 3 kuṭis and a compound. There is also an Upasikā–ārāmaya (nunnery) in the grounds, where *dasa-sil-menayo* Dhammanandā teaches meditation. For those who like a hot climate. Aff. Kanduboda.

Dimbulāgala MC. Dimbulāgala. 20 kms SE of Polonnaruwa. Large ancient cave-monastery on a rocky mountain ridge. Nice views from the top of the hill. In the front section there is a pirivena (monastic school) with about 100 sāmaṇeras, and there is an aranya area with about 15 monks (pirivena teachers) in the back. Interesting place but not well kept. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Veharahena Y. 108 km Post, Avudangāva, Habarana 50150. On Dambulla – Habarana Rd. Abbot: Ven. Dhamminda. Several kuṭis. Small area. Aff. Galduwa. **Bodhiraja AS.** Hiriwadunna, Habarana. Untidy. Aff. Waturawila. **Kudusīgiriya A.** Dehi-ata-kandiya. On Mahiyangana–Polonnaruwa road. **Ariyadhamma A.** Dehi-ata-kandiya. New and large aranya with many kutis. About 10 monks. Aff. Galduwa. **Polonnaruwa Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Perakum Uyana, Polonnaruwa. Tel. 027 2226260.

Anurādhapura District

Anurādhapura was the ancient capital of Sri Lanka and the cradle of Sinhalese Buddhist culture. It has a hot climate with a dry season. Mostly flat land with some lonely hills and rock-outcrops. There are many man-made tanks

(wewa). West of Anurādhapura is the large Vilpattu National Park known for its wildlife. Most of the province is undeveloped. Mihintale, east of Anurādhapura, has many old caves.

Kaludiya Pokuna Tapovanaya. Mihintale. Tel.: 071-842-1278. Ven. Saddhajīva, the Abbot, is very kind. Nicely situated near the Kaludiya Pokuna bathing pond, which is below the Mihintale Hill. Ancient cave monastery. 10 caves on the small hill above the monastery were repaired and are used. Nice kuṭis and well kept facilities. 5-6 bhikkhus. Sometimes there noise from the road. For photographs see Nyanatusita Picasa Album. Aff. Tapovana group.

Mihintale Kanda. This is where the arahant Mahinda began teaching the Dhamma in Sri Lanka. Possibly the nicest ancient monastery site in Sri Lanka. There are many caves around the hill which one can use for meditation. There are also cetiyas on the top of the large hill.

Katupotha Kanda Sri Vajirāramaya VMC. Katupotha Kanda, Palugaswewa, Mihintale Rd, Galkulama, Anurādhapura. Tel. 025-385-3670. Small place with ancient caves on southern side of the large hill 2 kms south of the Mihintale Hill. Ven. Sanāthavihārī, who is friendly and speaks English, is staying here. 6 kuṭis and a cave which is used as the library. Coming by bus from Kandy (Goods Shed Bus Stand) take a bus to Valvuniya, get off 5 kms past the Galkulama Junction on the Mihintale-Valvuniya Rd, sign on right (going towards Mihintale) to Aranya, walk 2 kms. Coming from Mihintale by car one has to turn off left [south] a few kms from Mihintale at the monastery sign on the Mihintale-Valvuniya Rd. Aff. Vajirārama group.

Ritigala A. Ganewalpolā, Kekirawa. The ancient cave monastery is on the eastern lower slope of Ritigalakanda mountain. It is visible from the Kurunegala-Anurādhapura Rd. The aranya is about 2 kilometers to the east from Galapitigala on the northern slope of the mountain range. The first Sinhalese arahant, Ariṭṭha stayed here. The aranya is in a nature reserve; a large forest with elephants and bears. 25 minutes walking from the aranya are the ruins of the large ancient monastery, which are taken care of by the Archeological Dept. The monastery isn't well kept. A few elderly bhikkhus and some young novices stay here. The best cave kuti is about 10 minutes walking up the slope under a big rock with a nice view from its top. Currently a stupa is being constructed on a rock above the monastery. Take a bus from Kekirawa to Habarana and get off at Galapitagala, walk one hour through the forest, be careful of elephants. Aff. Waturawila.

Subodhārāma BM / Labunoruwa Kanda AS. Maradankadawala, North Central Province 0094. Tel: 0602254193, 0722255883. E-mail: yadmp@yahoo.com. A few kms NE of Ritigala on the hill facing the northern slope of Ritigalakanda. A forest monastery connected to Ritigala A. with kuṭis and ancient caves in forest on top of a hill. About 7 monks. Piṇḍapāta. The well known teacher Ven. Mandakandawala Sudassana stays here. Take a bus from Kekirawa to Galamudana (10 km) and get out at Arugola (= Alagollewa ??) at the monastery sign. Aff. Waturawila.

Atdalagala AS. Giratalana, Migaleva. Between Kekirawa and Galgamuva. Foreign monks have stayed here. Forest, caves. Hot climate. Elephants. 2 km from the Resvehera-Sasseruva archeological sites. From Galgamuva take a bus to Katugampola and stop at Bongama. From there it is 1 ½ km walk. Aff. Kanduboda. It is on the southern side of the Galgiriyaakanda mountain, on which there are several aranyas with rock shelters. Less than a kilometer to the south is another aranya connected to Kandubodha called **Kanduwa A.** and then another kilometer away is **Sāliya Lena AS.** Galgiriyaakanda, Moraḡollāgama. Aff. Waturawila, which has several caves. On another side of the mountain is **Nilgirikanda Aranya** with an ancient reclining Buddha image in a cave.

Niyandagala A. Ambagaswewa, South Siyambalagamuwa. 2 kms. east of Siyambalagamuwewa, and 5 kms south of Negamma trainstation. Abbot: Ven. Sīlaratana. Small aranya on the base of a forested hill. Monks who practice Vipassana meditation in the Goenkaji tradition stay here and nearby a Vipassana meditation centre has been built by the abbot.

Sambodhi Y. Kuratīyāva, Migaleva 60750. 15 kms W from Kekirawa. Good new kuṭis and facilities, adjacent to large wewa (tank/lake). Possibly good for meditation. Hot, mosquitos, but good support. 3 monks. Take bus from Kekirawa. Aff. Galduwa.

Dhamma Anurādha VM, Ichchankulama Wewa Road, Kalattewa, Kurundankulama, Anuradhapura. Phone: [025] 222-6959 Mobile: [071]4182094. Website: www.anuradha.dhamma.org. A large new Vipassana meditation centre connected to the meditation tradition of Goenkaji.

Pancha Stūpa A. Palugolla. Mahananneriya. From Galgamuva, take a bus to Anamadūva and get off at Ihala Nanneriya junction. On a hill with an ancient stupa. Tradition unknown. **Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa.** Vatavandana Road, Lolugaswewa, Anurādhapura. Connected to Ven. K. Nāṇānanda. Tel. 025-492-8155. **Vedisagiri A.** Sanghappālaya, Vannikudawewa, Galgamuva 60721. = Between Māho and Anurādhapura. Aff. Galduwa. **Purāṇa Gallena AS.** Tammennāva, Tambuttagama 60734. = 25 kms S of Anurādhapura. **Maradankadawala AS.** Maradankadawala. On Anurādhapura-Kekirawa Rd, 30 kms SE of Anurādhapura. Aff. Galduwa. **Yodhayākanda AS.** Dampitigama, Halmillawewa. About 50 kms E of Anurādhapura on Anurādhapura- Trincomalee road. Aff. Waturawila. **Mihindu A.** Anurādhapura. Along road from Mihintale to Anurādhapura. Pirivena and ordination centre connected to Waturawila.

Trincomalee District

Trincomalē is a large port. There are some ancient Buddhist sites in this area. The interior is undeveloped with some large wilderness areas.

Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa, Seruvawila. Large cetiya, no kuṭis, rooms only. Many tourists. **Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuwa**, Kantalai. Tel. 026-492-9024. Next to lake, good kuṭis, walking paths. 7 monks. **Kathārapura AS**. Kathārapura, Duṭuwewa. North of Ratmale, 50 kms from Trincomalē on the Anurādhapura-Trincomalē road. Not very accessible. Aff. Waturawila. **Vān Ela Amādahara Tapovanaya**, Near Kantalai; mid-way the on the Habarana-Trincomalē Road. Aff. Tapovana group. **Pulmoddai Monastery**, Pulmoddai. A monastery in shrubland close to the coast and sand mining corporation. Abbot: Dhammagavesi Thera, speaks English well.

Vavuniya and Jaffna District

Situated on the northernmost limit of Sinhalese Buddhist culture. Due to the previous armed conflict, there are not many new monasteries here, but probably quite a few ancient ones.

Galpiyuma AS. / Galpokuna A. Kahatagollewa, Padaviya. Approx. 30 kms E of Vavuniya. On the road between Kēbitigollēva and Padaviya, get off at Kahatagallewa. Ancient cave monastery in large forest area with elephants. Good seclusion. It can be hot here. Ruins scattered in forest. Aff. Galduwa.

Padaviya Abhayabhūmi Tapovanaya. Deviyangekanda, Padaviya. On a hill with a few caves. Near army camp. Aff. Tapovana group.

Dambakolapatuna. Keerimalai, Kankasanture, Jaffna Peninsula. One or two kuṭis in quiet dune area near the beach, close to the Navy base, which supports the kuṭis. It is possible to go on piṇḍapāta in nearby villages. This is reputedly the place where the Sri Mahā Bodhi arrived in Sri Lanka.